

# ACCREDITATION CRITERIA

Policies, Procedures, and Standards

Effective July 1, 2016

**ACCREDITING COUNCIL FOR INDEPENDENT COLLEGES AND SCHOOLS**

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# INTRODUCTION

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The Accrediting Council for Independent Colleges and Schools (“ACICS” or “Council”) supports the concept that periodic evaluation entered into voluntarily by institutions and their peers enhances the quality of the educational process and demonstrates that self regulation of a profession is superior to outside regulation. This has been the philosophy of ACICS since 1912 when the first association of business schools was formed.

ACICS is incorporated as a non-profit education organization in the Commonwealth of Virginia and maintains offices in the District of Columbia. It has been recognized by the U.S. Department of Education since 1956 as a national institutional accrediting body. The federal government, for purposes of distributing institutional and student financial funds, lists ACICS as an accrediting body on which it relies in determining the quality of education and training offered at institutions that ACICS accredits.

To help institutions and peer evaluators meet their responsibilities in conducting the process, ACICS developed and periodically has revised a set of policies, procedures, and standards governing the activity. Collectively, they comprise the *Accreditation Criteria* which, when complied with by institutions, results in the awarding of accreditation. This document incorporates all changes agreed to by the institutions since the last published edition, as well as organizational modifications.

Embodied in these criteria is the belief by ACICS that accredited institutions should at all times demonstrate a high standard of professional conduct involving educational practices and business ethics. Accreditation is not a regulatory process in the legal sense. The Council encourages not just conformity to standards but a continuous striving for excellence. Only those institutions that believe in this tenet should seek accreditation.



# TITLE I            GENERAL POLICIES

## Chapter 1    An Overview of the Council

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### STATEMENT OF MISSION

The mission of the Accrediting Council for Independent Colleges and Schools is to advance educational excellence at independent, nonpublic career schools, colleges, and organizations in the United States and abroad. This is achieved through a deliberate and thorough accrediting process of quality assurance and enhancement as well as ethical business and educational practices.

### DEFINITION OF ACCREDITATION

Accreditation is an independent appraisal of an institution during which the institution's overall educational quality (including outcomes), professional status among similar institutions, financial stability, and operational ethics are self-evaluated and judged by peers. It is a voluntary activity separate and distinct from business licensing, authority to award educational credentials, and eligibility to administer student financial assistance.

### DEFINITION OF ACADEMIC QUALITY

ACICS defines academic quality as the overall performance of the institution in the context of its mission and as measured by the extent to which the institution achieves its intended student learning and student success outcomes.

Student learning outcomes involve assessment of skill and competency attainment. Student success outcomes include student retention or persistence; employment or placement; and student, graduate and employer satisfaction.

The effectiveness of the institution is demonstrated by its compliance with accreditation standards as well as its continuous striving for enhancement of quality. ACICS assesses academic quality in the following areas: mission and objectives; campus effectiveness planning; student outcomes; financial stability; recruitment and admission practices; organizational structure and administration; student services; academic program and curriculum; quality of faculty and instruction; physical facilities; library and learning resources; and publication and disclosure of student achievement.

### 1-1-100 – BYLAWS

The Bylaws of the Accrediting Council for Independent Colleges and Schools (“ACICS” or “the Council”) are an integral part of the *Accreditation Criteria* and are incorporated herein by reference. The Bylaws are contained in Appendix A.

### 1-1-200 – RECOGNITION

ACICS is recognized by the U.S. Department of Education (“the Department”) as a national institutional accrediting agency that is a reliable authority regarding the quality of education and training provided by the institutions that it accredits. Any proposed change in the policies, procedures, or accreditation criteria that might alter ACICS's scope of recognition or ACICS's compliance with the requirements for recognition by the Department will be submitted to the Department and other appropriate agencies.

The Department's recognition provisions include certain operational requirements. Accordingly, the Council adopts the following statements regarding ACICS and the manner in which it carries out its accreditation function:

- (a) The Council grants accreditation for an established period of time, as described more fully in these criteria. Prior to the expiration of the grant of accreditation, each institution must seek a renewal of accreditation. The Council maintains complete and accurate records for each accredited institution that cover the current and the prior periods of accreditation.
- (b) The Council conducts ongoing and comprehensive reviews of its accreditation criteria and its policies and procedures to ascertain their appropriateness and effectiveness. Proposed changes to the criteria or the Council's policies and procedures may be initiated by the Council or submitted by member institutions or other interested parties, and substantive proposed changes approved by the Council will be circulated to member institutions, appropriate governmental agencies, and other interested parties for comment. The Council will consider all comments before it adopts any final changes.

### **1-1-300 – PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

Visitors to Council policy meetings will be seated as space permits. They should notify the President or the Chair of the Council in advance if they wish to address specific agenda items. Individuals may request that items be placed on the agenda by writing to the President at least 45 days before each meeting.

# TITLE I            GENERAL POLICIES

## Chapter 2    Eligibility Criteria

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### INTRODUCTION

The Council fulfills an evaluative and accrediting function for a particular sector of postsecondary education. This function has been deemed appropriate by the U.S. Department of Education and by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) through the recognition of ACICS.

The mission of the Accrediting Council for Independent Colleges and Schools is to advance educational excellence at independent, nonpublic career schools, colleges, and organizations in the United States and abroad. This is achieved through a deliberate and thorough accreditation process of quality assurance and enhancement as well as ethical business and educational practices.

### 1-2-100 – MINIMUM ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

To be eligible for consideration for accreditation, an institution or entity must satisfy the following minimum requirements.

- (a) It shall be either an institution of postsecondary education (as herein defined) primarily offering certificates or diplomas and postsecondary institutions offering associate's, bachelor's, or master's degrees in programs designed to educate students for professional, technical, or occupational careers; or a noninstitutional entity offering professional enhancement education.

An institution is presumed to be an institution of postsecondary education if it (1) enrolls a majority of its students in one or more programs, the content of which is on a postsecondary academic level and which leads to a postsecondary academic credential (such as a certificate, diploma, or degree) or an occupational objective; (2) enrolls students who possess a high school diploma or its equivalent, or who are beyond the age of compulsory school attendance and demonstrate through valid assessment an ability to benefit from the educational experience; and (3) offers at least one program which is a minimum of 300 clock hours in length.

A noninstitutional entity must enroll a majority of its students in one or more programs, the content of which is on the postsecondary level or at a level which prepares the student for immediate enrollment into a postsecondary program. A noninstitutional entity is ineligible to participate in federal student aid programs or to award degrees.

- (b) It shall be legally organized; licensed by (1) the appropriate state education agency for postsecondary institutions or (2) the appropriate state agency for authorizing the conduct of business in that state for noninstitutional entities; and have offered its educational services to the general public for at least two years immediately prior to consideration of the application by ACICS.
- (c) Its mission shall be to offer educational programs which help students develop skills and competencies to enhance their careers.
- (d) Its residential enrollment and enrollment in each program shall be sufficient both to support course work and learning experiences that, separately or in combination, constitute measurable and defined educational programs, and to enable ACICS to assess the educational effectiveness of those programs.

Institutions that are considered distance education institutions may be considered on a case-by-case basis provided they require a residential component.

- (e) It shall have a sufficient number of graduates from a majority of its programs to enable ACICS to assess the educational effectiveness of those programs. Programs offered at any credential level from which there are no graduates will be reviewed in accordance with Section 2-2-107.
- (f) It shall be in compliance with all applicable laws and regulations.
- (g) It shall be organized as a corporation, as a limited partnership with a corporate general partner, or as a limited liability company.
- (h) Its evaluation for accreditation shall be authorized by the chief executive officer.
- (i) Its owners or managers shall not have been debarred by ACICS (See Section 2-3-1000).

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## TITLE I            GENERAL POLICIES

# Chapter 3    Classification of Campuses and Institutions

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### 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 two categories: main and branch campus.

**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 Campus.*** A branch campus is a location of an institution that is geographically apart and independent of the main campus of that institution, but under the same corporate structure as the main campus (i.e., part of the main campus corporation or a wholly owned subsidiary). The branch campus is permanent in nature, offers courses in educational programs leading to a degree, certificate, or other recognized educational credential, and has its own budget, faculty, administrative staff and supervisory organization.

Full disclosure must be made in the catalogs of the main campus and/or branch campus as to the credentials and programs offered at each location. A branch campus may publish its own catalog.

**1-3-103. *Learning Site.*** A learning site is a classroom extension of a main campus or branch campus that is apart from the managing location and is capable of providing sufficient academic and administrative oversight, providing access to all student services and instructional resources and maintaining academic quality. Learning sites used for delivery of distance education activity or collaborative arrangements with other entities for specific on-site educational activity must be approved by the Council on a case-by-case basis and are subject to a quality assurance visit as specified by the Council.

### 1-3-200 – CLASSIFICATION OF INSTITUTIONS

**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 branch campuses. Compliance with the *Accreditation Criteria* of the

main campus and its branch campuses is reviewed separately. Accreditation is granted to the institution at the main campus, with the specific inclusion of each of the branch campuses.

**1-3-203. Centrally Controlled Institution.** A centrally controlled institution is an institution that provides educational programs at multiple locations operating within the context of an administrative system. *\*Implementation of this section of the Criteria and all references to Centrally Controlled Institution is not yet effective. The effective date will be announced as soon as it has been determined by the Council.*

- (a) The centrally controlled institution must include one main campus with branch campuses 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 centrally controlled institution 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 centrally controlled institution, an institution must have
  - (i) been accredited for at least ten consecutive years; and
  - (ii) a main campus and at least three branch campuses 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 centrally controlled institution, 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:
  - (i) Clearly identified academic control;
  - (ii) Regular evaluation of the compliance of all the campuses with Council standards;
  - (iii) Adequate faculty, facilities, resources, and academic and student support systems;
  - (iv) Financial stability; and
  - (v) Long-range planning, including planning for expansion.

Compliance of a centrally controlled institution 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 branch campuses.



## TITLE II      GENERAL PROCEDURES

# Chapter 1      Gaining and Maintaining Accreditation

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### INTRODUCTION

This chapter outlines the steps that institutions must follow and the procedures utilized by ACICS leading to and following the award of accreditation status. Accreditation is a deliberate and thorough process and is entered into for purposes of quality assessment and institutional enhancement. When an institution applies for and receives a grant of accreditation, it is committing itself to operate in accordance with the standards and policies established by the Council throughout the term of the grant.

Inasmuch as accreditation is given for a specified period of time not to exceed six years, ACICS uses the term “initial grant” to connote the first time an institution is accredited. The term “renewal of accreditation” indicates a continuing status with ACICS after an institution has reapplied, has been reevaluated, and, in effect, has been reaccredited.

### 2-1-100 – ACCREDITATION WORKSHOP REQUIREMENTS

The Council schedules accreditation workshops each year. Applicants for initial or renewals 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 main campuses and all branch campuses are required to attend. For currently accredited institutions, the chief on-site administrators or the renewal self-study coordinators for single campus institutions and multiple campus institutions, and representatives of centrally controlled institutions are required to attend. Currently accredited centrally controlled institutions are responsible for providing workshop information to the chief on-site administrators and renewal self-study coordinators of all main campuses and branch campuses.

### 2-1-200 – INITIAL ACCREDITATION

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 2-2-107.

**2-1-202. *Application.*** The institution, after receiving a favorable preliminary review, shall submit a formal application for accreditation on forms supplied by ACICS. By submitting an application for an initial grant of accreditation, the institution agrees to be bound by the standards contained herein, including the ACICS Bylaws contained in Appendix A.

The institution shall certify that the requirements covered in Title I, Chapter 2, "Eligibility Criteria" have been met. The application forms, eligibility certification, supporting documents required in the application form, and the nonrefundable application fee shall be submitted to ACICS.

Once an institution has been determined to be eligible for evaluation, filed a formal application, and remitted the application fee, the application is kept active for a period of one year.

**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.

Initial applicants must submit audited financial statements certified by an independent certified public accountant for the institution's most recent fiscal year before a resource visit will be scheduled.

**2-1-204. *Self-Evaluation.*** Self-evaluation is the most important part of the accreditation process, requiring full involvement by administration, staff, and faculty. The Council publishes separate guidelines and materials to help institutions with the process.

**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 – RENEWAL OF ACCREDITATION**

It is the responsibility of the institution to file an application and remit the appropriate fees for a renewal of accreditation by September 30th of the year prior to the last year of the grant of accreditation. This also involves submission of the institution's renewal self-study, with supporting documents. Institutions that have not submitted a renewal self-study by December 1st of the year preceding expiration of the grant, and have not requested and received an appropriate extension or notified the Council of intent to voluntarily withdraw its accreditation, may be issued a compliance warning. 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.

**2-1-301. *Application.*** The process of application for a renewal of accreditation is the same as for initial accreditation except that institutions are not required to undergo another resource visit. Multiple campus institutions that are applying for renewals of accreditation will be required to submit a separate self-study for each branch campus.

Institutions classified as centrally controlled institutions may submit a consolidated self-study with an appropriate supplement for each location. The Council will not consider an application for a renewal of accreditation unless all reports are current and all fees are paid. (See Sections 2-1-801 and 2-1-802.)

**2-1-302. *Withholding of Accreditation.*** A decision by ACICS, based upon the application and evaluation for a renewal of accreditation, not to award accreditation for a new period is considered to be the withholding of accreditation, not the withdrawal of the previous grant of accreditation. The previous grant expires automatically with the passage of time unless the Council affirmatively extends the previous grant while it is considering the renewal of accreditation application. The Council always will give written reasons for withholding accreditation, and the matter, from that point, will be governed by procedures later described in Title II, Chapter 3, "Council Actions."

ACICS will not award a renewal of accreditation to an institution that is subject to an interim action by another recognized institutional accrediting agency or a state agency that could lead to the suspension, revocation, or termination of that institution's accreditation or authority to provide postsecondary education. Further, a renewal of accreditation will not be awarded to an institution that has been notified by its state licensing agency of a threatened suspension, revocation, or termination by the state of the institution's legal authority to provide postsecondary education, and the due process rights required by the action have not been exhausted.

#### **2-1-400 – VISITING TEAMS, SELECTION AND COMPOSITION**

When an institution has submitted a satisfactory self-study and other required documentation, the office of the President will appoint a team to visit and evaluate the institution. The institution is notified of the composition of the visiting team and may request that team members be replaced for cause.

**2-1-401. *Selection of Team Members.*** Evaluators are selected from among educators, executives, and practitioners in business, administrative, and technical fields, and from state departments of education and other evaluation and approval bodies. The person designated as chair of the team is experienced in management and is responsible for assuring that the visit is conducted fairly and thoroughly.

Appropriate state licensing and approval bodies are routinely notified of forthcoming visits and invited to participate in the visits as observers. They do not participate in team deliberations or in preparing the team report.

**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, location of the campus, student enrollment, credentials offered, and other special circumstances such as visits to centrally controlled academic administrative centers. Full-team on-site evaluation visits will consist of individuals serving as academic, administrative, public, or member representatives as defined in Appendix A - Bylaws.

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.

**2-1-403. *Evaluation of Separately Accredited Programs.*** If, in compliance with Section 3-1-515, an attestation and documentation have been provided to ACICS that a program at an institution has been separately accredited by a specialized accreditor recognized by the U.S. Department of Education, or the Council for Higher Education Accreditation, or, for foreign institutions, the government or appropriately recognized organization providing specialized accreditation, ACICS at its sole discretion may accept those documents as evidence that the accredited program meets an acceptable level of quality.

**2-1-404. *Staff Member on Visit.*** A member of the ACICS staff accompanies teams on visits. In the event that an ACICS staff member is unable to accompany a team on a visit, the use of a qualified and trained contractor may be used as the ACICS staff representative on the visit. The ACICS staff representative is responsible for assuring that comparability is achieved from visit to visit and from institution to institution. The same ACICS staff representative who accompanies a team also is available when ACICS deliberates and may be asked questions about what was observed and reported by the team during the visit.

**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 members of the team.

## **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, program offerings, and classification of the institution. For a multiple campus institution, the main campus and all branch campuses are subject to evaluation, either in conjunction with the main campus or separately.

**2-1-502. *Functions.*** The functions of the evaluation team are to verify information in the institution's self-study and to report all facts observed during the visit as to how the institution is accomplishing its stated mission, or failing to do so, in compliance with the criteria.

**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 an academic administrative center will generate a report that will be shared with teams conducting visits to the individual campuses within the centrally controlled structure.

During the visit, institutions are expected to make provisions for adequate consultation between team members and the faculty, administrative staff, students, and chief on-site administrative officer.

The team prepares a written report that covers each area reviewed at the institution and includes other information pertinent to an accurate evaluation. The report subsequently is sent by the team chair to ACICS.

An exit conference is conducted at the conclusion of the visit and is attended by the chief executive or administrative officer of the institution and any others designated by the chief executive officer. During the session, the chair of the team will summarize the evaluation team's findings. Members of the team also may append to the report recommendations for institutional improvement. The visiting team is not a decision-making body.

## **2-1-600 – POST-VISIT PROCEDURES**

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

**2-1-601. *Opportunity to Respond.*** The ACICS office sends a copy of each evaluation team report to the designated representative at the centrally controlled academic administrative center or to the chief on-site administrator of the

respective multiple or single campus institution. These individuals are invited to respond 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 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), and any official reports from state or federal regulatory bodies.

The Intermediate Review Committee (IRC) upon intensive review of institutional files, makes recommendations to the Council of possible accreditation action.

**2-1-603. *Council Review.*** All materials collected during the evaluation process are reviewed by the Council. Only the Council can take a final accreditation action.

## 2-1-700 – COUNCIL ACTIONS

Action by ACICS to accredit or renew accreditation or not to do so, or to limit or otherwise condition the grant of accreditation, is determined only following review of the self-evaluation report prepared by the applicant institution, the report of the visiting team, the response of the institution to that report, the institution's financial condition, and the recommendations (if any) of the interim reviewers. At each level of review, the number and seriousness of any deficiencies are taken into account, as well as the institution's indicated willingness and capability to overcome them. The Council may, at its discretion, direct an institution to submit a teach-out agreement, as described in Section 2-2-303 of the *Accreditation Criteria*. Specific Council actions are discussed in Title II, Chapter 3.

**2-1-701. *Maximum Length of Grants of Accreditation.*** The Council determines the grant lengths of each campus that is accredited by ACICS. The maximum length of an initial grant of accreditation is three years. If an institution can demonstrate a record of having been in good standing with another institutional accrediting agency recognized by the United States Department of Education, the Council may award an initial grant of up to four years. The maximum length of a renewal grant of accreditation is six years.

**2-1-702. *Grant Lengths of Branch Campuses in Multiple Campus Institutions.*** The Council at its discretion may determine that the grant length and/or expiration date for a branch campus will not coincide with the grant length and/or expiration date for the main campus. In the event that the main campus fails to maintain its accreditation status with ACICS, the associated branches and learning sites are ineligible for accreditation by ACICS.

## 2-1-800 – MAINTAINING ACCREDITATION

An institution, by successfully completing the process, inherently agrees to keep ACICS fully informed of activities at the institution. The Council requires an annual report from each main and branch campus, where appropriate. Institutional changes that must be reported to ACICS are described in Chapter 2.

**2-1-801. *Annual Accountability Reports.*** The Annual 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 branch campus. A centrally controlled institution must also submit a consolidated Institutional Accountability Report (IAR) containing information and data on the institution as a whole. These reports are due on or before November 1 annually. Failure to submit the Annual Accountability Reports 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 centrally controlled institution 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.

**2-1-803. Audited Financial Statements.** Audited financial statements, certified by an independent certified public accountant, are essential instruments in the determination by ACICS of an institution's financial stability. All institutions are required to submit audited financial statements within 180 days of the end of their fiscal year.

**2-1-804. Payment of Fees.** Institutions are required to pay all annual sustaining fees, user fees, evaluation visit deposits and expenses, and other assessed costs by the established deadlines. Non-payment of any fees or expenses subjects a member to revocation of accreditation without a hearing. (See Article VI, Section 5 of the Bylaws [Appendix A]).

**2-1-805. Unannounced Visits.** The Council, at its discretion, may direct an unannounced visit to occur at an institution, at any time. Procedures for unannounced visits are described in Appendix B.

**2-1-806. Denoting Accreditation.** Only after accreditation is granted by ACICS may an institution so denote its status in official publications or in advertising. The form of notice is prescribed by ACICS, and specific permissible language is set forth in Institutional Publications Requirements in Appendix C.

**2-1-807. Program Length and Tuition and Fees.** ACICS will determine average program lengths and tuition and fees annually based on information collected in the Annual Accountability Reports and will provide these data to all accredited institutions. Institutions with program lengths that are more than one standard deviation from the average will be required to submit an explanation for the deviation. If the Council does not accept the explanation, it may require a consultation between ACICS and the institution, direct an on-site evaluation, issue a compliance warning, or withhold inclusion of the program from the institution's current grant of accreditation.

In assessing these relationships, the Council will consider institutional mission, program objectives and content, types and locations of instructional delivery, knowledge and skills necessary for students to reach competence, and additional requirements that may be placed upon a graduate for employability, including, if applicable, certification or licensure.

**2-1-808. Financial Review.** The Council reviews the Annual Financial Report, audited financial statements, and other relevant information to monitor each institution's financial condition. When this review indicates that an institution's financial condition may be weak or deteriorating, the Council will require the institution to furnish Quarterly Financial Reports, a Financial Improvement Plan, or other interim narrative reports that demonstrate the actions the institution is taking to improve its financial condition. If the Council determines the institution no longer complies with the Council's requirements for financial stability, the Council will issue a compliance warning, issue a show-cause directive, or otherwise take negative action and require the institution to demonstrate compliance within the time frames described in Title II, Chapter 3. These time frames may be extended at the sole discretion of the Council for good cause, including evidence that there has been significant improvement in the deficient area(s) and the applicable time frame does not provide sufficient time to demonstrate full compliance, e.g., significant improvement in financial stability. Institutions that are required to submit interim financial reports or that are determined to be out of compliance with the Council's standards for financial stability are considered to be on financial review and are subject to additional restrictions regarding the initiation of branches and learning sites.

**2-1-809. *Student Achievement Review.*** The Council reviews the Campus Accountability Report (CAR) to monitor performance in terms of student achievement at both the campus and program levels. Measures will include retention; placement; and licensure pass rates, if applicable. When this review indicates that student achievement is below Council standards, the Council will require the institution to add an Improvement Plan within its Campus Effectiveness Plan (CEP). If the Council determines the institution is out of compliance with the Council's requirement for student achievement, the Council will issue a compliance warning and require the institution to demonstrate compliance with the next year's CAR submission. This time frame may be extended at the sole discretion of the Council for good cause, including evidence that there has been significant improvement in the deficient area(s) and the applicable time frame does not provide sufficient time to demonstrate full compliance, e.g., improvement in retention, placement, or licensure pass rates.

**2-1-810. *Student Loan Cohort Default Rates Review.*** The Council will monitor an institution's student loan cohort default rates. An institution may be subject to additional reports or actions based upon these rates.

## TITLE II      GENERAL PROCEDURES

### Chapter 2      Institutional Changes

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#### 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 and non-substantive changes.

#### 2-2-100 – SUBSTANTIVE CHANGES

**2-2-101. *List of Substantive Changes.*** The following institutional changes will be considered substantive and require Council approval before they can be included in the institution's scope of accreditation:

- (a) Any change in the established mission or objectives of the institution as described in Standard 2-2-103;
- (b) Any change in the legal status, form of control, or ownership of the institution as described in Section 2-2-400;
- (c) The addition of programs that are considered to be out of scope. Programs considered out of scope are those that represent a significant departure from existing programs that were offered when the agency last evaluated the institution as described in Standard 2-2-105;
- (d) The addition of courses or programs that represent a significant departure from the existing delivery method utilized when the agency last evaluated the institution as described in Standard 2-2-106;
- (e) The addition of programs of study at a degree or credential level different from that which is included in the institution's current scope of accreditation as described in Standard 2-2-107;
- (f) A change from clock hours to credit hours as described in Standard 2-2-108;
- (g) 25% or greater increase in the number of clock or credit hours awarded for successful completion of a program as described in Standard 2-2-109;
- (h) The acquisition of any other institution or any program or location of another institution;
- (i) The addition of a permanent location at a site at which the institution is conducting a teach-out for students of another institution that has ceased operating before all students have completed their program of study;
- (j) The entering into a contract under which an institution or organization not certified to participate in the Title IV, HEA programs offers more than 25 percent of one or more of the accredited institution's educational programs as described in Standard 2-2-505; and
- (k) The establishment of a branch campus geographically apart from the main campus at which the institution offers at least 50 percent of an educational program as described in Standard 2-2-104(a).
- (l) The proposed addition of a direct assessment competency-based program as described in Standards 2-2-111, 3-1-505, and Appendix H, Section 1.

**2-2-102. *Effect of Extensive Substantive Changes.*** The Council shall conduct a comprehensive on-site evaluation of the institution if substantive changes that have been made or are proposed are sufficiently extensive that the institution's capacity to maintain compliance with accreditation standards requires an immediate assessment. Substantive



changes are defined by Council as “extensive” when the types and/ or number of changes are so substantial that the nature and scope of the accredited institution will no longer be the same since last evaluated and in its place a new institution has evolved.

**2-2-103. *Change of Institutional Mission.*** It is the responsibility of the institution to secure approval from the Council prior to implementing any change in the mission or objectives of the institution.

**2-2-104. *Initiation of Additional Campus Activity.*** An additional activity includes any ongoing instructional activity offered at a site away from the main facility of an institution. Activity at a site that meets the Council’s definition of a “Branch” is described in Section 1-3-100, Classification of Campuses. Activity at a site that does not meet the definition of an Branch Campus is referred to below as a “Learning Site.” Reporting requirements are as follows:

- (a) *Branch Campus.* It is the responsibility of the institution to secure approval from ACICS of the intention to initiate a branch campus before the branch begins classes. If approved, 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 secure approval from ACICS prior to the initiation of a branch campus may call into question the accreditation of the institution.

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 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 based on its review of demonstrated administrative and financial capabilities.

Any institution which (1) is required to submit a financial improvement plan to the Financial Review Committee, or which (2) is under a deferral action by the Council must request and receive prior permission from ACICS for the initiation of any branch campuses. 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 branch campus while the action is in effect.

- (b) *Learning Site.* It is the responsibility of the institution to secure approval from ACICS prior to initiation of any new educational activity which is under the direct control of the on-site administration of a main campus or branch campus and at a site that is apart from the primary location of that campus. In addition, if that activity involves 50% or more of an academic program, the learning site must be approved by the Council before advertising, recruiting, and enrollment may take place. If approved, activity must be initiated at the learning site 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 learning site 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 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 such additional campus activity while the action is in effect.

**2-2-105. *Addition of Programs Out of Scope.*** It is the responsibility of the institution to secure approval from the Council of the intention to initiate the addition of programs that represent a significant departure or are out of scope from existing educational programs that were offered when the agency last evaluated the institution.

The institution or campus must initiate the approval process through the submission of a new program application and required documents for Council review and approval before being included in the institution's scope of accreditation.

**2-2-106. *Initiation of Distance Education (Online) or New Instructional Delivery Method.*** It is the responsibility of the institution to secure approval from the Council of the intention to initiate online delivery if all courses and programs within the institution are currently approved for residential or face-to-face instructional delivery method. Any significant change in instructional delivery method requires prior Council approval.

The institution or campus must initiate the approval process through the submission of a new program application and required documentation information for Council review and approval before being included into the institution's current scope of accreditation.

**2-2-107. *Expansion of Program Offerings to Higher Credential Level.*** It is the responsibility of the institution to secure approval from the Council of the intention to initiate a program at a higher credential level.

The institution or campus must initiate the approval process through the submission of a new program application and required documentation for Council review and approval before being included into the institution's scope of accreditation.

**2-2-108. *Initiation of Change from Clock to Credit Hour Offering.*** It is the responsibility of the institution to secure approval from the Council of the intention to initiate a change from clock to credit hours in its program offering through the submission of an application and required documentation.

**2-2-109. *Increasing the Number of Clock or Credit Hours.*** It is the responsibility of the institution to secure approval from the Council of the intention to initiate an increase of 25 percent or greater in the number of clock or credit hours awarded. If the percentage is less than 25 percent but results in a change in the credential level, the credential level will be evaluated to be within the institution's scope of accreditation.

The institution or campus must initiate the approval process through the submission of a new program application and required documentation for Council review and approval before being included into the institution's scope of accreditation.

**2-2-110. *Evaluation, Approval, and Monitoring of Substantive Change 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.* Initial inclusion of a branch campus within the scope of the accreditation of the institution may be granted upon receipt of all required information. An institution proposing the initiation of a new location must follow the procedures as outlined by the Council and disclosed on its website. A new location must receive initial inclusion before advertising, recruiting, or enrolling students

at the proposed location. The Council reserves the right to require a preliminary visit to any potential branch campus prior to the granting of initial inclusion.

A branch campus that is granted initial inclusion 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.

Only after a determination of acceptability and notification to the institution of the decision, may the institution consider a branch campus 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.* The Council must evaluate and approve additions to a main or branch campuses that are apart from the primary location of that campus. Educational activities at a learning site are eligible to be evaluated for inclusion within the scope of the accreditation of the managing campus provided that the learning site has been established to meet a specific educational need or condition and is authorized by the appropriate governmental education authority, if applicable.

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

A learning site that is granted inclusion 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 campuses of an institution are evaluated during an institution's regular evaluation for a renewal of accreditation.

- (c) *New Programs of Study.* Changes to an institution's scope of accreditation resulting from the proposed initiation of a new program of study, must be approved by the Council following a comprehensive review of supporting materials specific to the substantive change. Only upon approval of the substantive change to the institution's scope of accreditation is the institution or campus authorized to advertise, recruit, and enroll students for the new program.

To further monitor the institution or campus which initiated the substantive change to the institution's scope of accreditation, an on-site evaluation visit will be conducted as directed by the Council.

Following this visit, the Council may require the institution to submit additional information to satisfy areas of concern identified during the evaluation.

**2-2-111. *Addition of a Direct Assessment Competency-based Program.*** It is the responsibility of the institution to submit the required application for Council review and approval. The initial Council approval allows the institution to apply for submission of an application for approval of that competency-based program to the United States Department of Education for Title IV Federal student financial aid. See also Standard 3-1-505 and Appendix H, Section 1.

## **2-2-120 – INITIATION AND EVALUATION OF CHANGES WITHIN CURRENT SCOPE**

All programs and delivery methods must be within the institution's scope of accreditation and receive ACICS approval before recruiting or enrolling students. Programs offered by the institution are appropriately evaluated during the institution's initial grant of accreditation and renewal of accreditation evaluations.

The initiation of a new program, or a change in the overall objective of a currently approved program or in the credential level of an existing program, requires approval prior to implementation. The initiation of courses and programs offered via an online modality also requires approval prior to implementation. An application form and any additional documentation specified by ACICS must be submitted. Programs that have not started within one year of the proposed start date and programs that have been inactive for at least three years must be surrendered as defined in Section 2-2-503, *Termination of Programs*. Institutions or campuses must have demonstrated compliance with ACICS standards at a lower credential level before requesting a new program at a higher credential level.

Any institution or campus 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 or campus under a compliance warning, a show-cause directive, a negative action, or in a probation status must obtain prior approval to apply for a new program. Additionally, any institution or campus subject to a comprehensive on-site evaluation as a result of extensive substantive changes must obtain prior permission from ACICS for the initiation of any new program.

**2-2-121. *Changes to Existing Programs.*** Changes to existing or currently approved programs fall under (a) extensive changes and (b) non-substantive changes.

- (a) *Extensive Changes.* An extensive change to existing program application process must be initiated and approval received prior to implementation. Failure to do so will result in a compliance warning for offering an unapproved program. The following changes will be considered substantive changes to the institution's scope of accreditation and require approval per Section 2-2-100 Substantive Changes:
  - i. A 25% increase in the number of clock or credit hours awarded for successful completion of an existing program.
  - ii. a change from clock hours to credit hours
- (b) *Non-substantive Changes.* These include minor changes to existing programs which do not substantially alter the scope, objectives and nature of the programs as described in Standard 2-2-151.

**2-2-122. *Substantial Changes to Nonmain Campus Operations.*** Prior notification to ACICS is required when an institution decides to make substantial changes to the operation of a nonmain campus. Notice shall be made in writing to the President, who is authorized to act on behalf of ACICS in approving such changes.

Failure to notify and receive approval prior to substantial change of activity may call into question the accreditation of the institution, and further evaluation may be required.

**2-2-151. *Non-Substantive Program Changes.*** Institutions and campuses are required to notify the Council of all non-substantive changes to existing programs. Changes in the program name, clock/contact hours, credits awarded, or program length will be disclosed to the public via the ACICS Web site. The following non-substantive changes will be acknowledged:

- (a) Less than 25% change in existing contact hours; credits awarded, curriculum content (courses offered), or program length of a currently approved program within a 12-month period.
- (b) A change in the name of an existing program that does not change the overall objective of the program.
- (c) A change from semester to quarter credit hours or vice versa.

**2-2-152. *Non-Substantive Changes to Campus Operations.*** As a condition for maintaining its accreditation status, the institution is expected to keep ACICS informed of changes affecting campus operations.

## 2-2-200 – REDESIGNATION OF CAMPUSES

**2-2-201. *Branch-to-Main Campus Reclassification.*** A branch is eligible for evaluation as the freestanding main campus of a separately accredited, single campus institution only if it has been operating as an approved branch for at least two years. Branches seeking main campus status must submit the appropriate application, and audited financial statements certified by an independent certified public accountant for the institution's most recent fiscal year. The Council reserves the right to conduct an on-site quality assurance monitoring visit at any time as it deems necessary.

**2-2-202. *Reassignment and Consolidation of Campuses.*** Institutions seeking to reassign the classification of a campus or campuses or to consolidate groups of campuses must submit the appropriate application and documentation, including 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 branch inclusion process will be visited as part of that process, regardless of the consolidation proposal. The Council reserves the right to assign an on-site evaluation visit at either the main campus or branch campuses at any time as it deems necessary.

**2-2-203. *Designation of Centrally Controlled Institution.*** An institution may apply for classification as a centrally controlled institution 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.

## 2-2-300 – CLOSING OF A CAMPUS

In all instances of termination of activity at either main or nonmain campuses, ACICS must be assured that provision is made for presently enrolled students to complete the program of instruction for which they have enrolled, either at that institution or at another acceptable institution. In addition, ACICS must be assured that student academic transcripts are safely stored and protected and that the transcripts will be accessible to students and alumni indefinitely. ACICS and the appropriate regulatory agency must be notified of the arrangements made in this regard.

**2-2-301. *Closing of a Main Campus.*** An institution is required to notify ACICS as far in advance as possible when it plans to cease operation. It must complete the appropriate forms describing its plans for teaching out its students and for storing and servicing its records and other information necessary for effecting the cessation of operations as smoothly as possible. The institution's grant of accreditation will be revoked as of the effective date of closing.

When ACICS receives information from any source that an institution has ceased to operate, it shall immediately take steps to verify the information. If the Council believes that the institution, in fact, has ceased operations, the grant of accreditation is summarily suspended. Such action is authorized without prior notice or hearing and with immediate public notice.

The institution shall be notified of the summary suspension in writing at its address of record. Within 10 days after receipt of the suspension notice, the institution may petition ACICS for an expedited determination of whether such suspension should be withdrawn. If no petition is filed within 10 days, the suspension automatically shall become a revocation effective as of the date of notice of suspension.

**2-2-302. Closing of a Nonmain Campus.** An institution is required to notify ACICS as far in advance as possible when it plans to close a nonmain campus. It must complete the appropriate forms describing its plans for teaching out its students and for storing and servicing its records and other information necessary for effecting the cessation of operations as smoothly as possible. The nonmain campus will cease to be included in the institution's grant of accreditation as of the effective date of the closing.

**2-2-303. Teach-out.** The Council may direct a currently accredited institution to provide a school closure plan or a formal teach-out agreement in response to adverse information, high cohort default rate(s), low retention and/or placement rate(s), financial instability, or other concerns that may call into question the institution's ability to continue to serve the educational needs and objectives of its students or to continue as an on-going concern. If an institution closes or announces its intent to close, the Council will work to the extent feasible with the U.S. Department of Education and the appropriate state regulatory agencies to ensure that students are given reasonable opportunities to complete their education without additional charge. An institution that closes without completing its contractual training obligations to students must refund all unearned revenue.

Should an institution enter into a teach-out agreement with another accredited institution, the signed agreement must be submitted to and approved by the Council prior to implementation. In addition to general information on the institutions entering into the teach-out agreement, the agreement must demonstrate that:

- (a) students will be provided, without additional charge, all of the instruction promised but not yet provided by the closing institution; and
- (b) the teach-out institution is geographically proximate to the closing institution or otherwise can provide students with reasonable access to its programs and services, and that it has the necessary experience, resources, and support services to provide an educational program that is of acceptable quality and is reasonably similar in content, structure, and scheduling to that provided by the closing institution.

## **2-2-400 – OWNERSHIP OR CONTROL**

The Council at all times must know who is in control of an accredited institution. The transfer of ownership or a change in the control of an institution is a substantial change that must be approved by the Council before continuation of accreditation can occur. Any institution or owning corporation that is contemplating a transaction that may result in a change of ownership/control must submit the appropriate application and supporting documentation to the Council for approval 30 days prior to consummating the proposed change. Failure to provide this notification in a timely manner may negatively impact the continuation of accreditation. Transactions that constitute a change of ownership/control vary depending on the structure of the entity that owns or controls the institution.

Accredited institutions are owned or controlled by one of several types of corporations, by a limited partnership with a corporate general partner, or by a limited liability company, each of which is defined in the following subsections. In cases where the entity that directly owns or controls the institution is a subsidiary of another entity, the Council requires information on and monitors the ownership of the controlling entity, the parent entity, and any entities in the chain between those two.

- (a) *Privately held corporation.* A privately held corporation is one that operates for profit in which one or more stockholders own the voting stock of the corporation. The stock is marketable, but a majority of the voting stock is not traded on public markets overseen by governmental agencies such as the Securities and Exchange Commission in the United States. The control of a privately held corporation is vested in those in control of a majority of the voting stock of the corporation.

- (b) *Publicly traded corporation.* A publicly traded corporation is one that operates for profit in which a majority of the voting stock is traded on public markets overseen by governmental agencies such as the Securities and Exchange Commission in the United States. The control of a publicly traded corporation is vested in the voting members of the board of directors of the corporation.
- (c) *Not-for-profit corporation.* A not-for-profit corporation is one that has been determined by a governmental agency to be tax exempt for reasons the same as or similar to those set forth in Section 501 of the Internal Revenue Code of the United States. The control of a not-for-profit corporation is vested in the voting members of the board of directors of the corporation.
- (d) *Limited partnership with corporate general partner.* A limited partnership is one that is organized in accordance with the partnership laws of its home jurisdiction. The control of the limited partnership is vested in the general partner, which must be a corporation as defined in subsection (a), (b), or (c) above.
- (e) *Limited liability company.* A limited liability company is one that has been granted a certificate of approval under the laws of the state corporation office or other appropriate regulatory body in its home jurisdiction. A limited liability company may or may not issue certificates of ownership. The control of a limited liability company is vested in the members, whose ownership interests are defined in the limited liability company operating agreement or other such governing document, who are in control of a majority of the direct or beneficial ownership interest in the company.

**2-2-401. Change of Ownership or Control.** A change of ownership or control generally means that a transaction has occurred whereby a new person, combination of persons, or entity can exercise control of a corporation or limited liability company as described in Section 2-2-400. The following subsections outline the typical changes of ownership or control of the three types of corporations that own accredited institutions, including corporate general partners in limited partnerships, and limited liability companies. Transactions other than those outlined below, however, may constitute a change of ownership or control, and the Council reserves the right in its discretion to make the determination of whether a change of ownership or control has occurred in all cases. Institutions, therefore, must keep the Council informed of all substantive changes in the ownership of stock and the composition of the board of directors.

In addition to the transactions outlined below, any change from one type of entity to another as defined in Section 2-2-400 constitutes a change of ownership or control. Institutions also are reminded that nonmain campuses cannot be bought or sold independently of their main campus.

- (a) *Privately held corporation.* A change of ownership or control of a privately held corporation occurs as a result of any of the following transactions:
  - (i) the transfer of 50% or more of the total outstanding voting stock from one party or parties to another party or parties;
  - (ii) a transfer of voting stock that results in the ownership of 50% or more of the total outstanding voting stock by any party other than any previous owner of 50% or more of the total outstanding voting stock;
  - (iii) a transfer of voting stock whereby a stockholder's ownership of outstanding voting stock decreases from more than 50% to 50% or less, or from 50% to less than 50%; or
  - (iv) any other transaction whereby a stockholder or group of stockholders who previously could not exercise control of the corporation as described in Section 2-2-400(a) now can exercise control.
- (b) *Publicly traded corporation.* A change of ownership or control of a publicly traded corporation occurs as a result of any of the following transactions or events:

- (i) the change of 50% or more of the voting members of the board of directors in any rolling, 12-month period;
  - (ii) a change in the number of voting members of the board of directors in any rolling, 12-month period that will allow a group of directors to exercise control who could not exercise control before the change;
  - (iii) the acquisition of outstanding voting shares by any entity whereby that entity owns 50% or more of the total outstanding voting shares; or
  - (iv) any other transaction that is deemed by an appropriate governmental agency to constitute a change of control, including but not limited to a transaction that requires the corporation to file Form 8-K with the Securities and Exchange Commission of the United States.
- (c) *Not-for-profit corporation.* A change of control of a not-for-profit corporation occurs as a result of any of the following occurrences:
- (i) the change of 50% or more of the voting members of the board of directors in any rolling, 12-month period; or
  - (ii) a change in the number of voting members of the board of directors in any rolling, 12-month period that will allow a group of directors to exercise control who could not exercise control before the change.
- (d) *Limited partnership with corporate general partner.* A change of ownership or control of a limited partnership with a corporate general partner occurs when the corporate general partner has undergone a change of ownership or control as defined in subsection (a), (b), or (c) above.
- (e) *Limited liability company.* A change of ownership or control of a limited liability company occurs as a result of any of the following transactions:
- (i) the transfer of 50% or more of the direct or beneficial ownership interest from one member or members to another member or members;
  - (ii) a transfer of direct or beneficial ownership interest that results in the holding of 50% or more of the total direct or beneficial ownership interest by any member other than any previous member who owned 50% or more of the total direct or beneficial ownership interest;
  - (iii) a transfer of direct or beneficial ownership interest whereby a member's direct or beneficial ownership interest decreases from more than 50% to 50% or less, or from 50% to less than 50%; or
  - (iv) any other transaction whereby a member or group of members who previously could not exercise control of the company as described in Section 2-2-400(e) now can exercise control.

A change of ownership or control also occurs when ownership or control of the primary assets of an institution or the authority to operate an institution is transferred from the controlling corporation, limited partnership, or limited liability company to another corporation, limited partnership, or limited liability company. A change of ownership or control, however, has not occurred when there is a transfer of assets among wholly owned subsidiary corporations or between a wholly owned subsidiary corporation and its parent corporation; a transfer of assets from a subsidiary corporation to its parent corporation where the parent corporation owns a majority of the outstanding stock of the subsidiary corporation; or a transfer of assets among subsidiary corporations where the common parent owns a majority of the outstanding stock of the subsidiary corporations.

The Council, for purposes of determining ownership or control, views married couples as a single entity, and it views closely related family groups as a single entity in most cases where all of the present and future relevant stockholders



actively participate in the management of the corporation. No change of ownership occurs when stock is transferred to a close family member by operation of law or inheritance upon the death of one of the stockholders.

**2-2-402. *Contingent Sales.*** The Council will not grant reinstatement of accreditation after a change of ownership or control if the sale of the stock or assets triggering the change of ownership is contingent on approval of the transaction by the Council. If the transaction is rescinded as a result of a condition subsequent to the change of ownership or control of an institution, then the previous owner must apply to the Council for reinstatement.

**2-2-403. *Change of Ownership or Control Review Procedures.*** Institutions must submit Part I of the change of ownership/control application 30 days prior to the transfer of ownership or change in control occurs. Part II of the change of ownership/control application must be submitted within five business days after the transaction. The following procedures govern the Council's review of change of ownership/control:

- (a) *Automatic Discontinuation.* Any change of ownership or control results in the immediate and automatic discontinuation of an institution's grant of accreditation. The grant of accreditation may be reinstated only upon application to and approval by the Council. Because the discontinuation results without action or prior approval on the part of the Council, this change in status does not constitute withdrawal of accreditation and is not a negative action.
- (b) *Reinstatement.* After the grant of accreditation has been discontinued, it may be reinstated at the discretion of the Council within 30 days of the change in ownership/control. Those terms and conditions of the reinstatement process are set forth in policy statements issued to the field and in the change of ownership/control application document that institutions must file to initiate the reinstatement process. The Council will conduct a quality assurance monitoring visit within six months of the effective date of a change of ownership/control. The new owner(s) and the chief on-site administrator must provide evidence of attending an ACICS Accreditation Workshop within one year of the change of ownership or attend an Accreditation Workshop prior to the quality assurance monitoring visit.
- (c) *Effect.* Until the Council approves a reinstatement of the grant of accreditation, the accreditation of the institution remains in abeyance. If approval of the application for reinstatement is withheld, the matter will be treated procedurally as a deferral or denial, as the case may be. (See Title II, Chapter 3, Council Actions, for further information.)

## **2-2-500 – PROGRAMS OF STUDY REGULATIONS**

**2-2-501. *Evaluation of Programs for Purposes of Federal Financial Aid.*** As part of its evaluation of an institution for initial accreditation or renewal of accreditation, ACICS will review the institution's policies and procedures for determining credit hour assignments for purposes of awarding federal financial aid. ACICS will evaluate the reliability and accuracy of the institution's assignment of credit hours, as defined by federal requirements, to courses and programs and will determine whether this assignment conforms to commonly accepted practice in higher education.

- (a) *Credit Hours for Credit-Hour Programs.* The evaluation of credit hour programs, as defined by federal requirements, for purposes of financial aid is based on the following federal definition of a credit hour:

Except as provided in federal regulations, 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.

- (b) *Credit Hours for Programs that are neither Credit-Hour nor Clock-Hour Programs.* Clock hour programs as defined in federal regulations may not assign credit hours for the purpose of awarding federal financial aid. However, undergraduate degree programs of less than two years in length and non-degree programs that are not fully transferrable to degree programs of at least two years in length (with at least two graduates) at the same institution are eligible to convert clock hours to credit hours for purposes of awarding federal financial aid. In doing so, these programs may seek to combine a minimum number of hours in a range of hours of student work outside of class with a required minimum number hours of instruction alone to meet or exceed a total number of clock hours of instruction. The evaluation of these clock-to-credit hour programs is based upon the following federal conversion formulas:

The institution's student work outside of class combined with the clock hours of instruction meet or exceed the following numeric requirements:

- (i) A semester hour must include at least 37.5 clock hours of instruction;
- (ii) A trimester hour must include at least 37.5 clock hours of instruction; and
- (iii) A quarter hour must include at least 25 clock hours of instruction; and

The clock hours of instruction alone meet or exceed the following numeric requirements:

- (A) A semester hour must include at least 30 clock hours of instruction;
- (B) A trimester hour must include at least 30 clock hours of instruction; and
- (C) A quarter hour must include a least 20 hours of instruction.

**2-2-502. Program Compliance Warning.** When the Council determines that a program at a campus of the institution has fallen below the compliance standard for retention, placement, or licensure pass rates, the institution will be provided in writing with a warning regarding the alleged deficiency. The warning will note that the program will have to come into compliance by meeting or exceeding the program-level standard prior to the expiration of the established timeframe or be taught out and discontinued or otherwise conditioned.

A program compliance warning is not a negative or conditioning action and is therefore not appealable. Rather, it is issued as an official notification to an institution that a program provided by the institution is out of compliance with agency standards. Following receipt of a program compliance warning, the institution must bring itself into compliance within the time frames specified in Title II, Chapter 3, or the institution will be subject to adverse action in the form of withdrawal of approval for inclusion of the program within the institution's grant of accreditation. The time frames may be extended at the sole discretion of the Council for good cause, including evidence that there has been significant improvement in the deficient area(s) and the applicable time frame does not provide sufficient time to demonstrate full compliance, e.g., significant improvement in retention, placement or licensure pass rates.

**2-2-503. Termination of Programs.** The withdrawal of approval for a program following the issuance of a program compliance warning or a decision by an institution to terminate any program voluntarily must be appropriately communicated to all interested publics. These publics include, but are not limited to, students, governmental agencies, the local community, and ACICS.

All institutions subject to the withdrawal of approval for a program or who voluntarily terminate an approved program will be directed to submit a program termination plan that conforms to the following requirements. New students may not be enrolled in any program which cannot be completed prior to the termination date for which

public notice has been given. Moreover, the institution is obligated to continue to offer appropriate courses, including prerequisites, so that currently enrolled students will be able to complete the program and receive the credential which was their designated educational objective. For this purpose, the period of time need not extend beyond sufficient time for students already enrolled and maintaining normal academic progress to complete the program.

Council-directed withdrawal of approval for a program conditions the institution's grant of accreditation with respect to the inclusion of the program and therefore is appealable to the Council. Due to the limited nature and narrow scope of the withdrawal of program approval, the appeal to the Council may be in writing only.

To maintain approval, an institution must demonstrate active enrollment in each program of study. If an approved program is inactive for at least three years, the program will be considered discontinued and will be removed from the institution's list of approved programs. To reinstate the program, the institution must initiate a new program application process. Programs that have not started within one year of the proposed start date will be surrendered. To reinstate the program, the institution must initiate a new program application process. Requests to extend a new program's proposed start date beyond one year of the initial date must be submitted to the President.

**2-2-504. *Contracts or Agreements with Accredited Institutions.*** 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 permits an institution to arrange for a portion of its approved program to be delivered by another accredited institution. 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 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 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) More than 50% of the program must be delivered by the institution that awards the academic credential.

**2-2-505. *Contracts with Unaccredited Institutions or Entities.*** An institution may enter into a contract with an unaccredited institution or entity for the delivery of up to 25% of a program of study.

The institution must submit the contract and provide the following information to ACICS for review and approval prior to the initiation of the contract:

- (a) a full catalog description of the program and the services to be provided by the contractor;
- (b) a systematic plan for administrative and student evaluations of instructors provided by the contractor;
- (c) evidence of the qualifications of faculty to teach the contracted courses;
- (d) a description of the instructional facilities provided by the contractor; and
- (e) plans for the completion of the program should the contractor fail to provide contracted services.

**2-2-506. *Articulation Agreements with Secondary Schools.*** An institution may enter into an articulation agreement with a secondary school to transfer credit for courses taken at the secondary level that are equal to courses offered in a postsecondary institution. Articulation agreements must be in writing, periodically reviewed, signed, and dated. The institution must maintain a file consisting of the following: (1) a Letter of Intent to Articulate signed by both institutions specifying the numbers and titles of courses to be articulated, (2) a written description of the standards for acceptable transfer of credit, and (3) a comparison of the course objectives of the secondary and postsecondary courses(s) with signed approvals of both institutions. These credits appear on both the secondary and postsecondary transcripts.

**2-2-507. *International Partnership Agreements.*** An ACICS-accredited institution may enter into an international partnership agreement with an institution of higher education in a geographic location other than that of the United States or its territories. At least 25% of the program must be delivered by the institution that awards the academic credential.

The ACICS-accredited institution must submit an international partnership agreement to the Council and provide the following information to ACICS for review and approval prior to the initiation of the partnership agreement:

- (a) evidence provided by the institution or agency that the international partner and the programs to be delivered are recognized by an educational approval agency equivalent to an accrediting agency recognized by the US Department of Education;
- (b) a full catalog description of the program and the services to be provided through the partnership agreement;
- (c) a plan which describes recruitment, admission, standards of satisfactory academic progress;
- (d) a plan which describes student financial relations, including tuition and fees, and refund policies;
- (e) a description of the program(s) of study or courses offered;
- (f) a systematic plan for administration and student evaluations of instructors provided by in the partnership agreement;
- (g) evidence of the qualifications of faculty to teach;
- (h) a description of the instructional facilities at the international site;
- (i) a plan for the completion of the program(s) should the international partner fail to provide agreed upon services;
- (j) a plan for the safety and security of students, faculty, and staff.
- (k) specify which programs or portions are to be delivered via distance education and how the institutions will monitor growth.

## **2-2-600 – OTHER CHANGES**

**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 President has the authority to review and approve a change in name. The following limitations apply:

- (a) “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.

**2-2-602. *Change of Location.*** The Council must be notified and grant approval when an institution decides to change its physical location or its address and prior to the initiation of classes at any new location. Forms are supplied for the institution to explain and justify the change. The President has the authority to review and approve a change of location. In addition, the President may require an on-site evaluation visit as part of its review in order to determine compliance with Council standards.

## TITLE II            GENERAL PROCEDURES

### Chapter 3        Council Actions

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#### INTRODUCTION

When the Council has considered all of the information and reports submitted as a result of the accrediting process, it will make a judgment as to an institution's compliance with the *Accreditation Criteria*. The Council's decision is based on the extent of an institution's compliance. The judgment made is referred to as a "Council action." The actions which the Council may take are described in this chapter. Procedures available to institutions to challenge those actions and the maximum time frames for achieving final disposition of those actions by the Council also are explained. There are four general areas of Council actions: accreditation granted, accreditation deferred, accreditation denied, and accreditation withdrawn.

If the Council determines that an institution is not in compliance with the *Accreditation Criteria*, it will take prompt adverse action against the institution, or it will require the institution to take appropriate action to bring itself into compliance with the *Accreditation Criteria* within a time frame specified by the Council after the institution has been notified that it is not in compliance. That time frame will not exceed the following:

- (a) twelve months, if the longest program is less than one year in length;
- (b) eighteen months, if the longest program is at least one year, but less than two years in length; and
- (c) two years, if the longest program is at least two years in length.

The above time frames may be extended at the sole discretion of the Council for good cause, including evidence that there has been significant improvement in the deficient area(s) and the applicable time frame does not provide sufficient time to demonstrate full compliance, e.g., significant improvement in completion or placement rates.

#### **2-3-100 – ACCREDITATION GRANTED**

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

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

**2-3-101. *Admonition.*** The Council may judge an institution to be generally in compliance with the criteria, but it also may wish to call the institution's attention to one or more deficiencies that are not serious enough to preclude a grant of accreditation but that nonetheless must be corrected. In these cases, the institution will be awarded a grant of accreditation but will be admonished to correct the deficiencies. An admonition is an instruction to an institution either to initiate some prescribed practice or to refrain from some proscribed activity. An admonition does not condition the grant of accreditation, but failure to respond to it could result in a subsequent negative action.

## **2-3-200 – ACCREDITATION DEFERRED OR CONDITIONED**

**2-3-210. *Deferral.*** When Council determines there is insufficient evidence available to make a decision, they may defer action until a later date pending receipt of additional information. In such cases, the Council will provide in writing the reasons for the deferral, state what the institution needs to provide with sufficient time for the institution to respond, and specify the response date. Based on the nature and/or number of identified deficiencies, the Council may require attendance of key administrators at a workshop and/or consultation.

Deferral is, in effect, “no action at this time” and is not a negative action. Therefore, deferral is not an appealable action. Neither is a deferral a final action. In all cases of deferral on renewal of accreditation of accredited institutions, the Council will extend the present grant of accreditation for a period sufficient for the institution to provide the information needed.

**2-3-220. *Compliance Warning.*** When the Council determines that an institution is not in compliance with the Accreditation Criteria, the Council will issue a compliance warning. The institution will be provided in writing with the areas of noncompliance and will be required to demonstrate corrective action for review by ACICS.

A show-cause directive or a denial action/suspension order may be issued by ACICS as the result of this review as described in Section 2-3-230 or 2-3-402. Following receipt of a compliance warning, the institution must bring itself into compliance within the time frames specified in Title II, Chapter 3, or the institution will be subject to a final adverse action.

When the reasons for the compliance warning are satisfied, the action may be lifted either by the President in cases where no evaluation is involved or by the ACICS Council in cases where evaluation of additional material is required and following such evaluation.

**2-3-230. *Show-Cause Directive.*** When the Council determines that an institution is not in compliance, and is unlikely to become in compliance, with the *Accreditation Criteria*, the institution will be provided in writing with the areas of noncompliance and will be invited to “show cause” why its accreditation should not be suspended or otherwise conditioned.

The opportunity to show cause before the Council will be considered to be a hearing as defined in Section 2-3-500. A suspension order or denial action may be issued by ACICS as the result of this hearing, and such action is considered a final action which may only be appealed to the Review Board of Appeals as described in Section 2-3-600. Following receipt of a show-cause directive, the institution must bring itself into compliance within the time frames specified in Title II, Chapter 3, or the institution will be subject to final adverse action.

When the reasons for the show-cause are satisfied, the directive may be lifted by ACICS. All institutions directed by the Council to show cause why their accreditation should not be suspended or otherwise conditioned will be directed to submit a school closure plan and may be required to submit a teach-out agreement as described in Section 2-2-303 of the *Accreditation Criteria*.

**2-3-240. *Probation.*** Probation is a status that the Council may impose on an institution if the institution is unable to demonstrate that it consistently operates in accordance with the *Accreditation Criteria*.

**2-3-241. *Imposition of Probation.*** Probation may be imposed by the Council either when it continues a show-cause directive after at least one hearing either in person or in writing, or after an institution has notified the Council that it intends to appeal a denial action.

**2-3-242. *Result of Probation.*** The Council will not accept any applications for new programs or new campuses from any institution on probation unless the institution receives approval in advance to submit such an application.

**2-3-243. *Probation Lifted.*** Probation does not expire automatically. Instead, the institution is obligated to demonstrate to the Council that the conditions or circumstances which initially led to the imposition of probation have been corrected before probation will be lifted. Probation may be continued even if the show-cause directive has been vacated. The Council may order a special visit at the institution's expense before lifting probation.

**2-3-244. *Notification of Probation.*** The Council will notify the U.S. Secretary of Education, appropriate state regulatory agencies, other appropriate accrediting agencies, and the public of its decision to place an institution on probation. The institution is required to notify immediately in writing its current and prospective students that it has been placed on probation by its accrediting agency.

### **2-3-300 – ACCREDITATION DENIED**

Denial of an accredited status is characterized by the Council as a “withholding” action and is differentiated from suspension of accreditation, which is a “withdrawal” action. There are two levels of denial. One totally withholds accreditation of the institution or a branch; the other denies approval of a requested substantive change. Denial at either level constitutes a negative action and is challengeable by the institution. The process of challenge, however, is different for each level of denial as separately described in Sections 2-3-301, 2-3-302, and 2-3-303. In all cases of denial, the Council will give the institution written reasons for the denial, which are subject to modification through the appeals processes as later described and explained. Denial actions that are not appealed in accordance with the appeals procedures provided by the Council are considered final actions.

**2-3-301. *Denial of Initial Grant.*** An institution that objects to a Council decision to deny an application for an initial grant of accreditation has the right and will be given the opportunity to present its case and to be heard by a panel of the Review Board of Appeals. At such a hearing, the institution may not present new evidence for consideration and must follow the procedures described in Section 2-3-600.

**2-3-302. *Denial of Renewal of Accreditation, Branch Inclusion, or Change of Ownership/Control.*** An institution that objects to a Council decision to deny an application for a renewal of accreditation, inclusion of a branch campus, or reinstatement of accreditation following a change of ownership or control has the right to appeal the decision to the Review Board of Appeals pursuant to the procedures described in 2-3-604.

Additionally, in cases of denial of a renewal of accreditation, branch inclusion or reinstatement of accreditation following a change of ownership or control, the Council may place the institution on probation as described in Section 2-3-800.

**2-3-303. *Other Denial Actions Not Affecting Overall Accreditation.*** An institution that objects to a Council decision to deny an application for branch-to-freestanding status or new program inclusion will be given the opportunity to present its case to a panel of the Council and to be heard at a subsequent regularly scheduled meeting of the Council. The institution may offer new evidence that will be considered by the Council if timely submitted.



**2-3-304. *Subsequent Action Following Denial.*** If the denial not affecting overall accreditation is affirmed, the denial action becomes final and no further remedy is available to the institution. In all cases of denial, the Council retains discretion to specify whether and under what conditions the institution might initiate a request for consideration of the same type of application.

### **2-3-400 – ACCREDITATION WITHDRAWN**

“Withdrawal of accreditation” differs from “denial of accreditation” in that denial rejects an institution’s application for an initial grant of accreditation or for a renewal of accreditation to take effect upon the expiration of an existing grant of accreditation; withdrawal of accreditation takes away a current grant of accreditation before its expiration. Accreditation may be withdrawn from an institution through two types of Council action: “revocation of accreditation” or “suspension of accreditation.”

**2-3-401. *Revocation.*** Revocation occurs without a hearing for any of the following reasons:

- (a) An institution notifies the Council that it has closed and/or ceased operation.
- (b) An institution whose accreditation has been summarily suspended does not challenge the suspension within 10 days of receipt of the suspension notice (see Section 2-2-301).
- (c) The institution fails to file an annual report as required by the Council (see Sections 2-1-801 and 2-1-802).
- (d) The institution fails to pay its annual fees, application fees, other assessed fees, or evaluation expenses (see Section 2-1-804).

A revocation action is not appealable. It requires an institution to start anew and to undergo the entire accreditation process to regain accreditation.

**2-3-402. *Suspension.*** Suspension of accreditation may occur when, in the judgment of ACICS, an institution no longer complies with the criteria.

By way of illustration, ACICS might issue an order of suspension for reasons such as the following:

- (a) The institution or any of its components (a branch or new program, for example), is evaluated as directed by ACICS and is determined not to be in compliance with the criteria.
- (b) Periodic required reports filed by the institution fail to conform to Council reporting requirements.
- (c) The institution makes substantial or significant change, without notice to ACICS, in its operation, structure, governance, ownership, control, location, facilities, or programs of study.
- (d) The institution fails to respond to or cooperate with attempts by the Council to make arrangements for a site evaluation.
- (e) The institution has deviated from the criteria or other directives of ACICS.
- (f) The institution fails to disclose any agreements, options, or other contractual arrangements between the institution and other parties which bear on the management or control of the main campus or its nonmain campuses.

In all cases of suspension, the Council retains discretion to specify whether and under what conditions the institution might apply for an initial grant of accreditation.

**2-3-403. Procedural Guarantees for Withdrawal by Suspension.** In all cases where accreditation is subject to withdrawal by suspension under Section 2-3-402, the institution is afforded the following procedural guarantees:

- (a) Opportunity for a hearing before ACICS on all material issues in controversy.
- (b) Written prior notice of the proceedings, the charges levied, and the standards by which the institution ultimately is to be judged.
- (c) A decision on the record alone and a statement of reasons for the ultimate decision.
- (d) A right of appeal as provided in Section 2-3-600.
- (e) If the Review Board of Appeals affirms the withdrawal of accreditation by way of suspension, the appeal shall be deemed to be finally disposed of upon issuance of the decision and publication will be made as described in Section 2-3-607.

### **2-3-500 – COUNCIL HEARING PROCEDURES**

The following procedures will govern hearings to be held before the Council:

- (a) The request for a hearing must be made by a date determined by the Council, which will not be less than 10 days from the date of receipt of the letter of notification of the show-cause directive. The request for a hearing must be in writing and signed by the chief executive officer of the institution. Upon receipt of the request for a hearing, the Council will notify the institution of the procedures to follow to prepare for the hearing, including the dates by which the institution must submit its response to the show-cause directive.
- (b) The institution shall have the right to respond with evidence and facts concerning the areas of noncompliance with which it has been charged, to raise all reasonable questions, and to present evidence in opposition to or extenuation of the charges of noncompliance. Such written evidence must be submitted by the date prescribed by the Council unless the institution can show that such information was not available before the submission date and that failure to make a timely submission was outside of the institution's control.
- (c) At the hearing, the institution may present only evidence not already considered. The institution may send one or more representatives, including legal or financial counsel, to present its argument in opposition to or extenuation of the Council action. The Council transcribes all such hearings for its records. A copy of the transcript is available to the institution upon request.

**2-3-501. Hearing Format.** Hearings before the Council resulting from a show-cause directive and involving areas of noncompliance other than or in addition to financial concerns will take place before a panel of commissioners.

A hearing panel will be designated by the Council to hear the presentation of the institution. The panel will present its findings and its recommended action to the full Council, which will make the final decision in a time frame not to exceed twelve months, if the longest program is less than one year in length; eighteen months, if the longest program is at least one year, but less than two years in length; and two years, if the longest program is at least two years in length from the time the institution was found out of compliance with the *Accreditation Criteria*.

**2-3-502. Financial Hearings.** All hearings before the Council for financial concerns only will be heard by a panel of at least three commissioners, which will include at least one representative of the Financial Review Committee. The panel will present its findings and its recommended action to the full Council, which will make the final decision in a time frame not to exceed twelve months, if the longest program is less than one year in length; eighteen months, if the longest program is at least one year, but less than two years in length; and two years, if the longest program is at least two years in length from the time the institution was found out of compliance with the *Accreditation Criteria*.

## 2-3-600 – REVIEW BOARD APPEAL PROCESS

For those institutions that appeal to the Review Board of Appeals 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 of Appeals 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 of Appeals 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. The Review Board of Appeals shall consist of at least two (2) academic representatives, two (2) administrative representatives, and three (3) public members, as defined in Appendix A.

A Review Board of Appeals 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. A Review Board Panel will consist of at least one (1) public, one (1) administrative, and one (1) academic representative as defined in Appendix A.

**2-3-603. *Jurisdiction and Authority.*** The Review Board of Appeals is empowered to review, upon notice of appeal timely filed, actions specified in Sections 2-3-301, 2-3-304, and 2-3-402. The Review Board panel has the authority to:

- (a) affirm the decision of the Council;
- (b) amend the decision of the Council;
- (c) reverse the decision of the Council; or
- (d) remand the case to the Council with recommendations for further consideration.

The Review Board panel may amend or reverse the decision of the Council or remand the case to the Council for further consideration only if it finds the decision was:

- (i) arbitrary, capricious, or otherwise in substantial disregard of the Accreditation Criteria, or
- (ii) not supported by substantial evidence in the record on which the Council took the negative action.

The Review Board panel cannot amend or reverse the decision of the Council or remand the decision based on argument by the appellant that the Council action was disproportionate to the violations cited. The Review Board panel is further limited in that it has no jurisdiction or authority concerning the reasonableness of the Accreditation Criteria.

A determination by the Review Board panel to affirm the Council's decision is effective immediately upon the Review Board panel's action. A determination by the Review Board panel to amend, reverse, or remand the Council's decision will be referred to the Council for implementation and further action.

Except as noted below, Review Board panels will not consider any evidence that was not in the record before the Council. Documents reviewed by or available to evaluation teams are not considered to be part of the record unless they are appended to the team report or the institution submits them to the Council as part of the institution's response to the evaluation team report.

An exception to the policy on evidence will be made where a final adverse action is based solely on the failure of an institution to comply with the standards of financial stability. In that case, the institution on one occasion may seek review of significant financial information that was unavailable to the institution prior to the determination of the adverse action and that bears materially on the financial deficiencies identified by the Council. The Financial Review Committee will determine if the new financial information submitted by the institution is significant and material. If these criteria are met, the Financial Review Committee will provide a report of its review to the Council, which then will reconsider its adverse action in light of the new information. If the Council reaffirms the adverse action, the Financial Review Committee report and the result of the Council's recommendation will become part of the record under review before the Review Board.

The panel acts on behalf of the entire Review Board. Therefore, a decision of a Review Board panel is final and will not be considered further by the full Review Board. In cases remanded to the Council for reconsideration, the Review Board panel will identify specific issues that the Council must address. With respect to a Review Board panel decision that is implemented by or remanded to the Council, the Council will act in a manner consistent with the Review Board panel's decisions or instructions.

**2-3-604. *Request for Appeal.*** To exercise its right of appeal, the institution must file a request for a hearing before the Review Board of Appeals within a time frame determined by the Council, normally not more than 10 days from date of receipt of notification of the denial or suspension action. The request for a hearing must be in writing and signed by the chief executive officer of the institution. Upon receipt of the request for a hearing, the Council will notify the institution of procedures to follow in preparing for it.

**2-3-605. *Hearing of Appeal.*** The hearing will be held at a time and place designated by the chair of the Review Board panel. Three members will constitute a quorum.

If the appealing institution intends to submit a written appeals brief or statement of points, it must be received by the Review Board panel and the Council at least 15 business days prior to the hearing date. The Council's reply brief must be received by the panel and the appealing institution at least seven business days prior to the hearing. The Review Board panel chair will preside at the hearing and will rule on all procedural matters. There will be no right to cross-examine the opposing party or its representatives.

The Council transcribes all Review Board hearings for its own records. A copy of the transcript is available to the institution upon request.

The hearing shall be as informal as may be reasonable and appropriate under the circumstances. Both the Council and the institution may appear by or with counsel or other representative. The institution may waive a personal appearance, in which case the matter will be handled solely on briefs.

The chair of the Review Board panel may promulgate such additional rules of procedure for the scheduling and conduct of hearings as are consistent with these procedures.

**2-3-606. *Decision of the Review Board.*** Every decision must have the concurrence of the majority of the Review Board panel. Within a reasonable time after the conclusion of the hearing, the hearing panel shall issue in writing its decision with a statement of its reasons and recommendation, if any, to the Council. The decision will indicate those members of the Review Board panel who concur with the decision. Dissenting opinions may be filed. The majority decision with dissenting opinions, if any, will be furnished to the institution.

**2-3-607. *Council Receipt of Review Board Decisions.*** Decisions by the Review Board panel are transmitted to the Council for disposition and publication.

If the Review Board panel affirms the prior decision of the Council, there is no further remedy available within these procedures. The Council's decision is final, and immediate publication is automatic. If the Review Board panel remands the matter, the case shall be deemed to be finally disposed of when the Council takes final action on remand.

**2-3-608. *Expenses of Appeal Hearing.*** The institution shall bear the following expenses in connection with the appeal:

- (a) travel and subsistence of the Review Board panel members participating in the hearing; and
- (b) cost of the hearing room and transcription.

An appeals deposit must be made with the Council at the time of the filing of the notice of appeal described in Section 2-3-604. This deposit shall be applied to the expenses listed above, and any excess deposit will be returned to the institution.

### **2-3-700 – COMPLAINTS AND ADVERSE INFORMATION**

Procedurally apart from Council actions heretofore described and explained, ACICS receives and is obligated to investigate legitimate complaints about an institution from any source, that in any way pertain to ACICS criteria.

Also, ACICS periodically receives and may investigate information from federal or state agencies or other accrediting agencies, or through public media sources, which may indicate possible criteria violations. Adverse information may include, but is not limited to, low completion rates, low placement rates, high default rates, tuition refund problems, negative audits or program reviews, and governmental agency investigations.

When the staff of ACICS, with delegated authority to do so, determines that a complaint or adverse information warrants investigation, it will notify the chief executive officer of the institution in writing about the complaint or adverse information, and a copy of the information will be provided. The institution is requested to submit to the Council office its version of the conditions or circumstances which led to the complaint or adverse information. The complainant also will be informed in writing that the institution has been contacted and has been requested to provide information. Any governmental agency providing adverse information to the Council may be informed at the discretion of the Council of the action taken on the adverse information.

The role of the Council in resolving complaints and investigating adverse information is to determine whether the institution is out of compliance with one or more accrediting standards to which the complaint is addressed or to which the adverse information applies. After such determination, ACICS may then do one of the following:

- (a) dismiss the complaint or terminate further investigation of the adverse information;
- (b) postpone a final action on the complaint or adverse information if there is evidence that the institution is making progress to rectify the situation or if more investigation is necessary; or
- (c) notify the institution that, on the basis of information available, ACICS has determined that the institution is failing to comply with the *Accreditation Criteria* and that the institution is:
  - (i) issued a compliance warning
  - (ii) directed to show cause why its accreditation should not be suspended, revoked, or otherwise conditioned;
  - (iii) directed to submit a report to ACICS detailing plans for rectifying the area(s) of noncompliance; or
  - (iv) directed to undergo a special on-site evaluation.

The Council will inform the complainant of the determination by the Council and the disposition of the complaint.

**2-3-800 – SPECIAL AND FACT VISITS**

The Council reserves the right to initiate special on-site evaluation visits to or request specific reports from an institution at any time, both of which are to be completed under conditions and within a time frame determined by ACICS. Refusal of an institution to respond to or cooperate with such requests shall be grounds for suspension of its grant of accreditation.

At any time ACICS has substantive evidence or information that an institution is in jeopardy of having its eligibility status with a federal or state agency or its accreditation status with another accrediting agency conditioned, ACICS may direct a special on-site evaluation visit to that institution. The purpose of the visit will be to ensure that the students in the institution are not being harmed educationally because of the institution's alleged noncompliance with federal or state statutes or regulations or another accrediting agency's standards and criteria.

The Council also may direct a Fast Assessment and Compliance Team (FACT) visit to investigate and report on alleged improper practices at ACICS institutions.

The Council retains discretion to determine the size and composition of special and FACT teams and the length and breadth of the evaluation. In making these decisions, the Council will consider the issues and factors that prompted the visit, the size of the institution, and the nature of the institution's offerings.

**2-3-900 – DEBARMENT**

The Council may bar a person or entity, including spouses and closely related family groups as defined in Section 2-2-401, from being an owner, senior administrator, or governing board member of an ACICS-accredited institution if that person or entity was found guilty of fraudulent or criminal behavior; was debarred by a government agency or an accrediting agency; or was an owner, senior administrator, or governing board member of an institution that lost its accreditation as a result of a denial or suspension action or that closed without providing a teach-out or refunds to students matriculating at the time of closure.

The Council will notify the person(s) or entity whom it intends to bar as the result of denial or suspension action within four months following the loss of the institution's accreditation. It will notify the person(s) or entity whom it intends to bar as the result of the closing of an institution within a reasonable period of time following the closure. In each case, the Council will forward an intent to bar notice by both electronic and certified mail to the last institutional mailing address known to the Council, unless the Council has received updated mailing information following the institution's closure or loss of accreditation. Those individuals or entities will be considered notified when the Council has forwarded the intent to bar notice in accordance with these procedures.

The intent to bar notice will inform the person(s) or entity that they are entitled to present information and materials in writing or in person to appeal the intent to bar at the next scheduled meeting of the Council. The notice will stipulate that if they intend to appeal the intent to bar, the person(s) or entity must inform the Council office in writing within ten days of receipt of the notice as to whether they will appeal the intent to bar in writing or in person.

A debarment order may be issued by the Council as a result of its consideration of the facts presented. The Council's decision will be sent to the person(s) or entity by electronic and certified mail following their appeal before the Council.

The Council's decision is final if the person or entity elects not to appeal within ten days of Council notification. The Council decision is also final following appeal.

The Council retains final discretion to establish the terms and length of the debarment. The length of debarment will be for a period of at least three years; however, it may vary depending on the circumstances that led to the debarment decision. Individual circumstances may justify a longer period of debarment.

# TITLE III EVALUATION STANDARDS

## Chapter 1 General Standards Applicable To All Institutions

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### INTRODUCTION

This section of the *Accreditation Criteria* comprises the most heavily weighted part of the accrediting process. Chapter 1 states and explains the minimum operational and educational practices expected of all institutions, whatever methodology and mode of educational delivery is used and wherever the institution provides educational activities. Inasmuch as these are minimum expectations, extreme deviation from them is not permitted. The Council, while encouraging innovation at institutions and attempting to be somewhat flexible in its interpretation of these standards, does not grant waivers on criteria pertaining to good educational practice.

Chapters 2-6 contain additional criteria which are applicable to institutions offering nondegree programs and programs culminating in occupational associate's, academic associate's, bachelor's, and master's degrees. The Council recognizes that some requirements of these standards may not be appropriate for entities, and it may waive specific standards on a case-by-case basis.

### 3-1-100 – MISSION: PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

Every institution must have a mission which is its specific purpose for existing. This mission, together with a set of objectives to accomplish it, must be summarized in a mission statement. The objectives should be devoted substantially to career-related education and should be reasonable for the program of instruction, mode of delivery, and facilities of the institution.

Institutions may exhibit a variety of missions, ranging from those which have a singleness of purpose to those which are multi-purpose.

**3-1-101. *Disclosure.*** The mission statement of the institution, its purpose, and its supporting objectives must be stated in the catalog and in other publications readily available to the public. The mission statement must be expressed in terms readily understandable by a prospective student, parents, the public, and other educational institutions.

**3-1-102. *Implementation.*** The institution is measured both in terms of its stated purpose and in terms of its conscientious endeavor to fulfill this purpose. The faculty, financial resources, physical plant, administration, management, and educational activities shall be appropriate and committed to successful implementation of the stated mission of the institution.

### 3-1-110 – CAMPUS EFFECTIVENESS

An important indication of the overall effectiveness of an ACICS-accredited institution is the degree to which it meets its own predetermined educational outcomes. Each campus of an ACICS-accredited institution, consistent with its mission, shall develop and implement a Campus Effectiveness Plan (CEP) that identifies how it plans to assess and continuously improve its educational programs and processes, and that addresses its ability to meet the educational and occupational objectives of its programs. In this document, each campus should attempt to incorporate short-term objectives to be accomplished in order to achieve the mission of the institution as it applies to the campus and its future goals.



**3-1-111. *Campus Effectiveness Plan.*** Each campus shall have on file a Campus Effectiveness Plan (CEP). A main and its branches may share aspects of an CEP, such as the mission, but each main and branch campus 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 campus.

For the Campus Effectiveness Plan, the following six elements, at a minimum, will be evaluated for campus effectiveness:

1. student retention rates;
2. placement rates;
3. level of student satisfaction;
4. level of graduate satisfaction;
5. level of employer satisfaction; and
6. student learning outcomes.

In compiling the data needed to assess the six elements, each 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 six 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 campus shall publish annual placement and retention goals. In formulating these goals, the campus shall take into account the retention and placement rates from the previous three Campus Accountability Reports and the specific activities that will be undertaken to meet those goals. The activities must demonstrate the campus' ability to maintain or improve retention and placement outcomes each year.

Campuses are encouraged to include additional elements in their plans, such as graduation rates, cohort default rates, and matrices of financial stability, which are relevant to improving their overall effectiveness.

**3-1-112. *Implementation and Monitoring of the Campus Effectiveness Plan.*** All 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 Effectiveness Plans.

**3-1-113. *Evaluation of the Campus Effectiveness Plan.*** All campuses 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. All campuses should adjust their goals accordingly as a result of an evaluation of the Campus Effectiveness Plans.

**3-1-200 – ORGANIZATION**

Each institution should have an organizational structure designed to promote among all staff and faculty a spirit of understanding, cooperation, and responsibility. Performance standards and monitoring controls need to be employed to insure adequate administrative functioning. The annual budget expenditures should be adequate to properly carry out the stated educational objectives of the institution.

**3-1-201. *Disclosure.*** The governance, control, and corporate organization of the institution shall be stated in appropriate publications, including the catalog, together with the names of the trustees, directors, administrators, and officers.

**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 administrator of a main campus or branch campus and, for a distributed enterprise, the designated chief administrator of the institution.
- (b) The institution must maintain written evidence that faculty and staff members clearly understand their duties and responsibilities, know the person to whom they report, and understand the standards by which the success of their work is measured. A copy of the document describing these terms and conditions shall be given to the faculty and staff member and a copy maintained by the institution. The administration must maintain documentation of the evaluation of the faculty and staff.
- (c) In the administrative organization of the institution, the professional integrity of the faculty and staff shall be respected. Administrative decisions shall not inhibit the academic freedom of the faculty. The institution shall adopt a policy assuring academic freedom and communicate the policy to all faculty.
- (d) An institution shall establish, publish, and implement appropriate grievance policies and procedures for considering complaints received from students, employees, and other interested parties. The grievance procedure for students shall be published in the institutional catalog or student handbook and shall include the name and address of ACICS.

**3-1-203. *Data Integrity.*** All data reported to ACICS for any purpose is expected to reflect an accurate and verifiable portrayal of institutional performance and is subject to review for integrity, accuracy, and completeness.

**3-1-204. *Financial Stability.*** The financial well-being of an institution requires constant oversight by competent managers.

The institution shall have adequate revenues and assets to meet its responsibilities, to ensure continuity of service, and to accomplish its mission. Budgetary practices should reflect a balanced application of resources to operations; the amount of expenses and debt must not burden the educational objectives of the institution; the proportion of the budget allocated to instructional programs must be adequate; and the financial profile of the institution must support the intent of its objectives.

**3-1-300 – ADMINISTRATION**

Each institution must coordinate its administrative functions to best serve its educational mission. All staff should be well trained to carry out administrative functions. Detailed recordkeeping enhances the management of the institution.

**3-1-301. *Management.*** Each institution shall have a chief executive officer. Moreover, each institution also shall have a qualified on-site administrator at the main campus and at all branches. This person must be made known to ACICS and shall be responsible for the implementation of the stated mission as determined by the institution's governing body. The staff continuously shall evaluate the programs of study, student activity program, guidance services, financial aid services, instructional procedures and resources, and other aspects of the educational program of the institution. The chief executive officer shall seek to improve the educational program as a result of such evaluation. A current copy of the *Accreditation Criteria* shall be maintained by each main and branch location and shall be available to faculty and staff.

**3-1-302. *Evidence of Degrees.*** Institutions listing degrees of staff members in the catalog shall have on file appropriate evidence of the degrees. Copies of either transcripts or diplomas are acceptable.

**3-1-303. *Records.*** Careful recordkeeping is crucial to the smooth day-to-day operation of an institution. The data from these records are important to the institution for future planning, to students for informational purposes, and to evaluation teams during school visits. All such records should be maintained at each institutional site or shall be available at each site during evaluation visits. The Council expects at least the following:

- (a) Adequate records shall be kept by each institution relative to administrative operations. These include financial aid activities, admissions, curriculum, accreditation and licensure, guidance, instructional resources, supplies and equipment, school plant, faculty and staff, student activities, and student personnel.
- (b) For all students admitted under an ability-to-benefit determination, the institution shall maintain records of the validated test scores, initial and periodic academic and career advising, and any other factors used by the institution to support its admissions determination.
- (c) For institutions admitting students under an ability-to-benefit determination, documentation shall be maintained to evidence the relationship between test cut-off scores on whatever test the institution uses and successful academic or employment outcomes.

Such records could include such data as admissions rate (acceptances versus rejections), completion rate of those enrolled, general placement rate, or specific career placement rate.

For students tested and enrolled based on a test's validity to predict aptitude, the test score should predict successful completion of the program. Institutions must develop longitudinal data comparing the test cut-off score(s) utilized for acceptance with the eventual success of students.

An institution admitting a high percentage of applicants based on testing and losing a comparably high percentage of those students before completion (even allowing for factors other than ability) may not be using the appropriate test to measure aptitude, or the cut-off score for admission is too low, or both. The use of the minimum cut-off scores determined by the U.S. Department of Education will not, in and of itself, satisfy the requirements of this section.

- (d) For high school graduates or those with high school equivalency, the institution shall have on file evidence that the student has received a high school diploma or its equivalent. A signed statement by the student is acceptable documentation. The student's record also may include personal background information, evidence of other educational experiences (including certificates, diplomas, or degrees earned), or information about the ability of the student to benefit from the education offered, including any aptitude testing information or recommendations from other sources.

- (e) A permanent academic record (transcript) of the student's progress shall be maintained. Compatible with the institution's mission, the transcript shall indicate student accomplishment in terms of clock hours, units of credit, or some other recognized system. The grading system used shall be fully explained on the transcript and must be consistent with that appearing in the institutional catalog.
- (f) All basic records and reports pertaining to students shall be safely protected. Acceptable methods of protecting records from theft, fire, water damage, or other possible loss include appropriately fire-rated file cabinets (that can be and are locked when not being used); a central location such as a vault, the entirety of which is protected; and microfilmed records, computer disk, backup tape, printout records, or other hard copies of records protectively stored off the premises.
- (g) Certain basic records shall be maintained by the institution for a specified period of time. Transcripts should be kept indefinitely, and admissions data and other records should be kept for at least five years from the last day of attendance. Financial aid records shall be maintained according to the guidelines established by the funding source.

### **3-1-400 – RELATIONS WITH STUDENTS**

Each institution should strive to ensure that its relations with students always reflect the highest ethical standards and conform to all applicable laws and regulations. Each institution also is required to develop a program of student services that is consistent with its stated mission, including services provided for students attending branch campuses and learning sites. Such services should support the educational program and reflect the institution's concern for the welfare of the student.

### **3-1-410 – ADMISSIONS AND RECRUITMENT**

It is up to an institution to establish its own admissions criteria. It is the responsibility of ACICS to ensure that all who are enrolled are accorded equal educational opportunity.

The monitoring of the activities of an institution's employees, vendors, contractors, or agents in the referral, recruiting, evaluation, and admissions processes is the responsibility of the institution. The activities of these individuals must be supervised by the institution. An institution may not delegate these activities to anyone whose economic incentives are to recruit prospects through means that are unethical or subject to public criticism or to admit ill-prepared applicants. The institution may not contract, directly or indirectly, with third parties who are generally unfamiliar with the institution. "Non-employees" are independent contractors who are not considered "employees" under the Internal Revenue Code.

Institutions participating in Title IV programs must be aware of regulations imposed by the U.S. Department of Education as they apply to recruiting practices.

**3-1-411. Admissions.** The admissions policy shall conform to the institution's mission, shall be publicly stated, and shall be administered as written. The following minimums apply:

- (a) The requirements for students admitted to programs leading to a certificate, diploma, or degree shall include graduation from high school or its equivalent, or demonstration of the student's ability to complete the program, as provided for by governing laws.
- (b) It is the responsibility of the institution to maintain student records which reflect the requirements for admission of all students.

- (c) Institutions are not precluded from admitting, under different requirements, students who are beyond the age of compulsory school attendance or who may be otherwise specially circumstanced, such as:
  - (i) having financial sponsorship through contractual arrangements with public or private organizations;
  - (ii) having identifiable needs requiring remedial instruction as a supplement to the regular curriculums;
  - (iii) participating in innovative postsecondary programs specially described to ACICS; or
  - (iv) being enrolled in individual courses not leading to an academic credential.

**3-1-412. *Recruitment.*** Recruiting shall be ethical and compatible with the educational objectives of the institution. The allocation of an institution's financial resources for purposes of recruitment shall be consistent with the stated mission of the institution. The following minimums apply:

- (a) An institution shall ensure that any person or entity engaged in admissions or recruitment activities on its behalf is communicating current and accurate information regarding courses and programs, student achievement disclosures (See Section 3-1-704), services, tuition, terms, and operating policies. The institution must maintain documentation that demonstrates that it systematically monitors its recruitment activities.
- (b) No prospective student names obtained as a result of a survey, canvass, promise of future employment or income while a student, or other marketing activity by an institution may be used for recruitment purposes unless the name of that institution is clearly identified and purposes of such activity are communicated to the respondent. This does not preclude the use of surveys or other studies to determine the employment needs and the educational desires of the local community.
- (c) An institution shall conform to the laws and regulations of each of the states in which it operates and shall ensure that each of its representatives is properly licensed or registered as required by the laws of that state.
- (d) Representatives of an institution shall use only those titles which accurately reflect their actual duties and responsibilities. Recruitment and enrollment personnel may not be designated as counselors or advisors and may not make final decisions regarding financial aid eligibility, packaging, awarding, and disbursement.
- (e) Referrals are permitted, and the referrer may be paid a fee so long as the referrer provides full disclosure and does not misrepresent the purposes of soliciting a prospective referral and such payments do not violate state or federal laws.
- (f) All recruiters must be supervised by the institution's administration to ensure that their activities are in compliance with all applicable standards.

**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 if applicable, a list of institutions with which the institution has established articulation agreements.

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

**3-1-414. *Enrollment Agreements.*** All institutions must use an enrollment agreement for each enrolled student which clearly outlines the financial obligations of both the institution and the student. The agreement must outline all program related tuition and fees, must be signed by the student and the appropriate school representative, and a copy provided to the student.

### **3-1-420 – STANDARDS OF SATISFACTORY PROGRESS**

Each institution shall establish and administer measures of satisfactory academic progress for all students as referenced in Appendix D.

**3-1-421. *Compliance.*** The institution complies with the requirements of Appendix D.

**3-1-422. *Documenting Compliance.*** The institution documents compliance with its Satisfactory Academic Progress policy.

**3-1-423. *Oversight.*** The institution encourages and assists students who are experiencing difficulty in progressing satisfactorily in their programs.

### **3-1-430 – TUITION AND FEES**

**3-1-431. *Institutionally Financed Grants, Scholarships and Loans.*** The Council recognizes that most accredited institutions offer or administer grants, scholarships and loans for students. Institutions must meet appropriate guidelines for such programs in order to ensure their legitimacy. Participation in ethical institutional grant (See Appendix E, “Guidelines for Institutionally Funded Student Aid”), institutional loan, and scholarship programs requires adherence to the following:

- (a) In addition to administering federal or state student aid programs, institutions may offer the following types of student financial aid:
  - (i) grants funded by the institution and awarded to all students within a qualifying category or to all students who demonstrate a need in accordance with published standards;
  - (ii) scholarships funded by the institution or a third-party and administered by the institution to provide aid to students who demonstrate academic achievement in accordance with published standards;
  - (iii) loans funded by the institution and available equally to all students.
- (b) Institutionally financed or administered grants, scholarships and loans must be described in the current catalog with a description of the criteria for the award, the application procedures and deadlines, and amounts that may be awarded. All information must avoid false, misleading or exaggerated statements.
- (c) Institutionally financed loans may vary in amount depending on the student’s need. The terms and conditions for loans, including forbearance and repayment, must be described in the current catalog. All institutionally financed loans must be collected in accordance with sound and aggressive business practices for the collection of student loans. Institutions must counsel students concerning their loan repayment obligations.

**3-1-432. *Tuition and Charges.*** Institutions may charge varying amounts of tuition and fees for different programs. All charges should be consistent for similarly circumstanced students enrolling at the same time and in the same programs, however, and detailed financial records should indicate at all times the financial obligation of the student to the institution. The following are minimum expectations:

- (a) The tuition and other charges, including the period for which the student is financially obligated, shall be clearly stated in the catalog of the institution. The existence of any separate or comparable publication containing tuition rates must be referenced specifically in the catalog. The schedule of charges must be uniformly administered to similarly circumstanced students.
- (b) The financial records of the students shall clearly show the charges and dates for the posting of tuition, fees, and other charges; the payments and dates of payment; and the balance after each transaction.
- (c) Announcements of changes in tuition or fees must state the effective date of the change and be uniformly administered.
- (d) Terms of payment may be varied by the institution so long as the tuition charges are uniformly administered.

**3-1-433. Refund Policy.** The institution must have a fair and equitable refund policy that is applicable to all students and that is published in the institution's catalog. Specific federal or state policies may apply.

**3-1-434. Administration of Student Financial Aid.** Participation in state or federal student financial aid programs requires serious administrative responsibility. The Council expects all institutions participating in such programs to be knowledgeable of and in compliance with applicable laws and regulations. The following requirements govern how such activities are evaluated by ACICS:

- (a) An institution participating in student financial aid programs shall designate at least one competent person at the site to administer student financial aid. The extent of this activity and the personnel needed shall be governed by the size and classification of the institution. The person who determines the amount of student awards cannot be responsible for disbursing those awards.
- (b) The person or persons assigned to administer student financial aid programs must in all cases be a part of the administration. Administrative personnel involved in student recruitment as their major activity shall not have the final decision-making authority in the approval or awarding of student financial aid.
- (c) There shall be professional awareness on the part of the financial aid administrator as shown by membership and participation in state, regional, or national financial aid associations and by other educational activities designed to keep the administrator up to date on procedures and changes in the field.

**3-1-435. Cash Discounts.** Any institution providing discounts for cash received in advance of the normal payment schedule must have a written policy. That policy must be provided in writing to all student applicants prior to enrollment.

The institution must demonstrate that the policy:

- (a) is available to all students at the institution; and
- (b) bases the size of the discount on the financial benefit the institution receives from the payment of cash earlier than otherwise would be required under the institution's normal tuition payment schedule or applicable retail installment contract.

### **3-1-440–STUDENT SERVICES**

**3-1-441. Counseling and Guidance.** Each institution shall designate at least one person on staff experienced in counseling students on personal or academic problems and employment opportunities. The extent of such activity, and the personnel assigned to it, shall be determined by the size, classification, and admissions standards of the

institution, the characteristics and location of students, and the means of communication with them. Orientation activities shall assist new students in adapting to the institution. The following are minimum expectations:

- (a) A system of educational, occupational, and personal advising shall be available to students and shall be provided on a periodic basis to ability-to-benefit students enrolled pursuant to Section 3-1-303(b).
- (b) Institutions shall emphasize retention and program completion for all students through activities that take into account their academic and socioeconomic characteristics.
- (c) Institutions shall provide employment assistance and document activity. An institution shall not guarantee employment or the starting salary of its graduates. Follow-up studies on graduates and employer satisfaction shall be conducted by all institutions at specific measuring points following placement of the graduate. All institutions that use placement percentages or salary projections as part of their recruiting activities shall maintain data on all graduates, including the percentage receiving jobs and the percentage receiving jobs in the career field for which they were trained. Institutions also should keep data on students who do not graduate but who become employed on their own or with the institution's assistance.

An institution is encouraged to provide placement assistance, when requested, to graduates of other ACICS-accredited institutions who are relocating to a new community.

- (d) Institutions shall document that students are counseled concerning their student loan repayment obligations.

**3-1-442. *Extracurricular Activities.*** Institutions which sponsor or conduct programs of extracurricular activities shall base such programs on well-defined purposes. These programs shall be designed primarily to serve the educational needs of the students, and the institution shall provide guidance and supervision for them.

### **3-1-500 – EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES**

The major index of an institution's quality is the effectiveness of its educational program. The educational program must be consistent with the stated mission, be adequate in breadth and context to achieve it, and produce measurable results. Its educational activities, whether residential or otherwise and whether group or individually oriented, shall include definable instruction, interaction, and evaluation. A second index of institutional quality is the resources available to instructors and students.

The third index of an institution's quality is the competence of its faculty. The effectiveness of any institution depends upon contemporary teaching strategies and practices and upon the knowledge, ability, and commitment of its faculty. The selection, orientation, guidance, stimulation, and evaluation of the teaching staff is one of the most significant responsibilities of the administration. The faculty should actively participate in developing the total educational program of the institution.

**3-1-501. *Faculty Involvement in Academic Governance.*** The faculty shall have a clear responsibility, distinct from that of developing institutional policy, to participate in administering and implementing policy, especially as it pertains to academic affairs. The institution shall adopt and publish a policy on the responsibility and authority of faculty in matters of academic governance. At a minimum, the policy should address the role of faculty in:

- (a) the development of the educational program of the institution;
- (b) the selection of course materials, instructional equipment, and other educational resources;
- (c) systematic evaluation and revision of the curriculum;
- (d) assessment of student learning outcomes; and



(e) planning for institutional effectiveness.

**3-1-502. *Programs Requiring Certification or Licensure.*** 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.

**3-1-503. *Specialized/Programmatically Accredited Programs.*** 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.

**3-1-504. *Education or Study Abroad Activities.*** An institution may enter into formal education or study abroad relationships with eligible institutions outside its home country in accordance with the requirements outlined in Appendix J.

**3-1-505. *Direct Assessment Competency-based Programs.*** Competency-based programs utilize direct assessment of student learning by faculty and other experts in the field serving under the supervision of the institution for academic progression in lieu of clock or credit hours. The institution must demonstrate that it has utilized a robust and structured process for identifying the required knowledge, skills and professional behavior (“soft skills”) to be considered “competent” in the field. The syllabus for each course must clearly define the competency standards and how the direct assessment of student learning will be conducted.

The institution must demonstrate to the Council its methodology for determining the equivalent number of credit hours or clock hours required for the program.

The institution is required to maintain, as part of the permanent academic record, student work submitted for direct assessment along with the institution’s assessment of student achievement.

Specific standards and requirements are described in Appendix H Principles and Requirements for Nontraditional Education, Section 1.

### **3-1-510 – PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION, PLANNING, DEVELOPMENT, AND EVALUATION**

**3-1-511. *Program Administration.*** The administration of the academic programs shall be assigned to individuals whose academic or experiential qualifications are related to the programs of study. The amount of time devoted to the administration of the program(s) must be commensurate with the size and scope of the institution and its program offerings.

Within the administrative structure of the institution, program administrators or department heads shall have authority and responsibility for the development and administration of the programs and have adequate time and resources to fulfill these responsibilities.

**3-1-512. Program Planning.** Educational activities shall be consistent with the institution's mission and objectives. The credibility and integrity of an institution shall be reflected by the manner in which its mission and objectives correlate with the educational opportunities made available to students.

The Council recognizes the legitimacy of various modes of educational delivery. An institution using various modes of delivery should demonstrate overall effectiveness and quality consistent with the criteria (See Glossary definitions for distance learning, independent study, and self-paced instruction; see also Appendix H, Principles and Guidelines for Nontraditional Education). The following standards apply:

- (a) The formation of policies and design of educational programs should involve students, graduates, administrators, faculty, and other interested parties such as advisory committees. This practice also should serve as an evaluation process to determine effectiveness and relevance when the institution relies upon curricula, courses, courseware, or coursework that is designed, leased, or owned by another entity or provided by or through a network of entities.
- (b) Flexibility in organization and administration shall be provided to serve varying groups and situations. Provisions shall be made for individual differences among students in the learning applications, learning environments, and modes of instructional delivery available to students.
- (c) The use of community resources shall be varied in each program and shall be utilized to enhance student enrichment and potential career opportunities. (See Glossary definition for Community Resources)

**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 learning contract signed by the student and institution that outlines the course objectives and procedures unique to this form of instruction. For externships, institutions are required to develop a written and mutually signed agreement that outlines the arrangement between the institution and the site, including specific learning objectives, course requirements, and evaluation criteria. The Council's expectations for detailed syllabi, independent study, and externships 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, Requirements for English as a Second Language Programs).

**3-1-514. Program Evaluation.** The faculty shall participate in a systematic process of continuous curriculum evaluation and revision. Institutions are encouraged to consider curriculum changes designed to serve students' needs that may be determined by community surveys or other fact-finding procedures relating to educational or employer needs.

**3-1-515. Specialized Accreditation.** If a program is accredited by a specialized accreditor recognized by the U.S. Department of Education, or the Council for Higher Education Accreditation or, for foreign institu-

tions, the government or appropriately recognized organization providing specialized accreditation, the Chief Executive Officer of the institution shall attest to ACICS and provide documentation that it is in compliance with the standards of the specialized accreditor.

**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/externship) 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 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 externship. The formula for calculating the number of quarter credit hours for each course is:  $(\text{hours of lecture}/10) + (\text{hours of lab}/20) + (\text{hours of externship}/30)$ ; 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:  $(\text{hours of lecture}/15) + (\text{hours of lab}/30) + (\text{hours of externship}/45)$ .

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.

A “clock (contact) hour” includes a minimum instructional time 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.

- (b) Credit award rationales for nontraditional delivery of courses or programs (e.g., distance education or independent study) generally do not use the above lecture/laboratory/practicum formulas for credit calculation. The rationale used must be submitted to the Council for pre-approval of the credit calculation. As a part of the approval application, an institution must demonstrate that the clock or credit hours awarded are appropriate for the degrees and credentials offered using a thoroughly developed rationale. The institution may accomplish this by demonstrating that students completing these programs or courses have acquired equivalent levels of knowledge, skills, or competencies to those acquired in traditional formats.

Courses offered in nontraditional formats must be structured to ensure that students have sufficient opportunity for preparation, reflection, and analysis concerning learned subject matter. Institutions should be aware that federal law requires a minimum number of weeks per academic year for Title IV eligibility purposes. The U.S. Department of Education uses eligibility criteria and definitions for Title IV disbursements that may be different from these in the *Accreditation Criteria*.

- (c) Institutions may award academic credit to students who demonstrate competency in a subject area based on their academic, occupational, or personal experiences. The following expectations apply:
  - (i) Institutions shall establish and adhere to a systematic method for evaluating and awarding academic credit for those experiences (e.g., experiential learning, advanced academic standing, credit by examination) that satisfy current program course requirements.
  - (ii) Institutions must maintain documentation to support that credit hours awarded are appropriate based on the assessment of the knowledge, skills, or competencies acquired.

**3-1-517. *Course Scheduling.*** Courses must be scheduled in such a way as to be educationally appropriate for the academic background of the students served, the type of the coursework involved, and the method of educational delivery. The Council will review the number of minutes of instruction provided, the appropriateness of the length of the breaks between classes, the number of classroom hours per week, the expectation of outside preparation, and the educational needs of the students.

### **3-1-520 – CREDENTIALS CONFERRED**

**3-1-521. *Conferring of Credentials.*** The conferring of certificates, diplomas, or degrees by an institution shall be consistent with its mission and objectives and in compliance with applicable state laws.

### **3-1-530 – INSTRUCTION**

**3-1-531. *Instructional Tools.*** Institutions shall:

- (a) provide appropriate facilities, instructional equipment, resources, support for modes of instructional delivery, and personnel;
- (b) ensure academic freedom and other conditions favorable for effective classroom instruction;
- (c) ensure that the quantity and type of instructional material and equipment is proportionate to the size of the institution and the nature of the program; and
- (d) comply with applicable copyright laws in the use of instructional materials.

**3-1-532. *Instructional Components.*** Required instructional components shall include:

- (a) systematic planning;
- (b) well-defined instructional objectives;
- (c) the selection and use of appropriate learning materials;
- (d) appropriate modes of instructional delivery;
- (e) the use of appropriate assessment strategies; and
- (f) the use of appropriate experiences.

### **3-1-540 – FACULTY**

**3-1-541. *Faculty Preparation.*** Preparation of faculty members shall be academically and experientially appropriate to the subject matter they teach. Faculty members shall be competent to teach the subject matter offered and shall have reasonable latitude in their choice of teaching methods.

U.S. based institutions must provide evidence that all faculty members are graduates of institutions accredited by agencies recognized by the United States Department of Education. Credentials of faculty who are graduates from

institutions outside the United States must be evaluated by a member of the Association of International Credentials Evaluators (AICE), the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (AACRAO), or the National Association of Credential Evaluation Services (NACES) to determine the equivalency of the credentials awarded by institutions in the United States.

Internationally based institutions must provide evidence that all faculty members are graduates of institutions recognized by their respective governments as institutions of higher education or be evaluated by a member of the Association of International Credentials Evaluators (AICE), the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (AACRAO), or the National Association of Credential Evaluations Services (NACES) to determine the equivalency of the credentials awarded by institutions in the United States. ACICS, if unable to determine qualifications, may require the translation and/or evaluation of transcripts in languages other than English.

**3-1-542. *Verification of Credentials.*** Institutions must maintain official transcripts for credentials that qualify faculty members to teach their assigned courses and for those credentials that are listed in the catalog. All these credentials shall be on file in the administrative offices at the campus location nearest to where the faculty member is primarily employed. An official transcript is one sent from the registrar's office at the institution where study was completed directly to an employing institution or downloaded electronically from a link provided to the employing institution from the institution where study was completed. Transcripts received electronically must bear an indication that it is an "official transcript" and the link provided must have information on how to verify the authenticity of the transcript. A transcript bearing the notation "issued to student" is not an official transcript for employment purposes.

**3-1-543. *Faculty Development.*** Institutions are required to establish faculty development plans including both in-service and 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. Institutions are responsible for demonstrating that these plans are appropriate given each faculty members' training, education, and related work experience and that they provide the proper mix of in-service training and professional growth based on the academic and experiential background of the faculty. (See Glossary for definitions of "in-service training", "professional growth", and "faculty development").

**3-1-544. *Faculty Meetings.*** Regularly scheduled faculty meetings or department meetings, with participation by full-time and part-time faculty, shall be held. Discussions and attendance shall be recorded.

### **3-1-600 – EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES**

Each institution must provide an environment that is conducive to good instruction and learning and that supports the educational programs offered by the institution. The adequacy of the environment is assessed against the demands made upon it by the curricula, faculty, and students.

**3-1-601. *Plant and Equipment.*** The buildings, classrooms, equipment, furniture, grounds, instructional tools, support systems, instructional facilities, machinery, and other physical requirements of the educational program shall be appropriate and shall contribute to the achievement of the institution's objectives. Equipment, instructional tools, and machinery must be properly installed and maintained.

**3-1-602. *Code Requirements.*** The plant shall meet the general tests of safety, usefulness, cleanliness, maintenance, health, lighting, and compliance with any local or state laws governing physical facilities, particularly with respect to fire, safety, and sanitation.

### 3-1-700 – PUBLICATIONS

It is important for institutions to recognize the value of “truth in advertising” when promoting their operations. Publications must be prepared and presented in a professional manner to reflect favorably upon the institution. Information published must be accurate and factual and reflect the current status of the institution. Only the Council can accept or reject an institution’s catalog, and a final decision will not be made based on a draft.

**3-1-701. *Catalog.*** Each institution shall publish and provide to each enrolled student a catalog which complies with Appendix C, “Institutional Publications Requirements.”

**3-1-702. *Multiple-School Catalog.*** All institutions utilizing a common catalog must be of common ownership. Photographs of the physical facilities of any of the institutions must be captioned to identify the particular institution or campus depicted. The faculty and staff of each institution and the members of the general administration exercising supervisory responsibility for the group of institutions must be clearly identified with respect to each institution and the overall administration. Any information contained in the catalog that is not common to all institutions in the group should be presented in such a manner that no confusion, misunderstanding, or misrepresentation is possible. For further information, see Appendix C.

**3-1-703. *Advertising.*** Literature used by an institution must be presented in such a manner as to be factual with respect to services offered or benefits promised. An English translation for advertising that is in a language other than English must be available. For further information, see Appendix C.

If an institution publicly discloses incorrect or misleading information about its accredited status, the contents of an evaluation team report, or accreditation actions with respect to the institution, the institution must make a public disclosure of correction through the same media or means.

**3-1-704. *Performance Information.*** Each campus shall routinely provide reliable information to the public on its performance, including student achievement information, that includes, at a minimum, retention, placement, and licensure examination pass rates (where applicable). The information provided shall be for the entire campus and for each program as reported to ACICS in its most recent Campus Accountability Report.

### 3-1-800 – LIBRARY RESOURCES AND SERVICES

The adequate provision of library resources and information services, appropriate to the academic level and scope of an institution’s programs, is essential to teaching and learning. It is incumbent upon all member institutions to assess the level of library resources needed in relation to their programs and to provide a range of support to meet these needs. The size of collections and the budget allowed for library resources and services do not ensure adequacy. The quality, relevance, accessibility, availability, and provision of support services ultimately will determine the adequacy of an institution’s efforts. In assessing library resources and services, ACICS requires that an institution, at a minimum, shall:

- (a) develop an adequate base of library resources;
- (b) ensure means to access these resources;
- (c) develop a continuous assessment strategy for library resources and information services;
- (d) provide adequate staff to support library development, collection organization, and accessibility;
- (e) ensure that library services are provided to all learners, including those at nonmain campuses; and
- (f) provide training and encouragement for students and faculty to utilize library resources as an integral part of the learning process.

# TITLE III EVALUATION STANDARDS

## Chapter 2 Standards For Nondegree Programs

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### INTRODUCTION

In addition to the general standards in Chapter 1, which apply to all institutions, the following standards apply specifically to nondegree programs.

### 3-2-100 – FACULTY

Teaching hours, assignments, and schedules will vary from field to field and from institution to institution but should in all cases allow time for adequate preparation and professional development. The institution shall devise a plan for the efficient use of faculty competence and time, including student-teacher ratios, number of teacher preparations, and number of teaching hours. Reasonableness may be defined by, but is not restricted to, the following expectations.

**3-2-101. *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, and community relations responsibilities of the instructor.

**3-2-102. *Field Preparation.*** Assignments requiring more than three preparations in different fields (e.g., secretarial studies, business administration, data processing) shall not be given to an instructor during one academic term.

**3-2-103. *Subject Preparation.*** Not more than five preparations in different subjects within the same field (e.g., Accounting I, Accounting II, Keyboarding I, Business Mathematics, Business Law) shall be assigned to an instructor during one academic term.

**3-2-104. *Assignments.*** 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 teaching general education shall hold a minimum of a master's degree. Instructors shall have a minimum of 18 semester or equivalent hours of coursework in their teaching discipline. At internationally based institutions, transcripts in languages other than English for general education instructors must be translated into English.
- (b) 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.
- (c) 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.

**3-2-105. *Stability.*** There shall be an adequate core of full- and/or part-time faculty to ensure sound direction and continuity of development for the educational programs. The institution shall demonstrate through outcomes, length of service, reasonable retention of faculty, and other measures that the core faculty ensures that the institution will meet its stated mission and objectives. The institution shall promote stability in the faculty through compensation, fringe benefits, professional growth opportunities, and other incentives.

**3-2-106. *Student-Teacher Ratio.*** The student-teacher ratio shall be reasonable at all times in keeping with generally accepted delivery modes and course content. In determining a reasonable ratio, the institution shall consider the following factors:

- (a) the amount of lecture given by instructors in skills-building and practice classes;
- (b) the level of existing skills of the students;
- (c) the amount of direct supervision exercised by the instructor and the availability of instructional equipment in a lab setting where there is primary instruction in a specific skill; and
- (d) the use of technology in providing alternative instruction or evaluation.

### **3-2-200 – INSTRUCTIONAL RESOURCES, MATERIALS**

The instructional resources, audiovisual teaching equipment, and instructional materials shall be adequate to serve the needs of the institution's educational programs. The resources shall include current titles, periodicals, professional journals, or full-text online resources appropriate for the institution's educational programs. There shall be evidence that appropriate instructional resources, equipment, technology, and materials are utilized to support the educational objectives.

**3-2-201. *References.*** The institution shall have available and easily accessible to faculty and students standard reference works appropriate to the curriculum. Major consideration will be given to the variety of volumes, periodicals, online resources and information technology readily available to students and faculty, recency of publications, appropriateness, and relevance to the 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; including resources that are 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.

**3-2-203. *Inventory.*** A current inventory of instructional materials and equipment shall be maintained by the institution.

**3-2-204. *Budget.*** Budget allocations and expenditures for instructional resources, equipment, and materials shall be sufficient to meet the needs and fulfill objectives of the institution's programs.



## TITLE III EVALUATION STANDARDS

# Chapter 3 Standards For Occupational Associate's Degree Programs

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### INTRODUCTION

In addition to the general standards in Chapter 1, which apply to all institutions, the following standards apply specifically to institutions offering occupational associate's degree programs. Occupational associate's degree programs are those programs which award associate's degrees that contain less than 15 semester hours, 22.5 quarter hours, or the equivalent of general education.

### 3-3-100 – STATE AUTHORITY

The institution must be legally authorized by the appropriate state education agency, where such authority exists, to confer the associate's degree.

### 3-3-200 – EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES

**3-3-201. Objectives.** The objectives of an occupational associate's degree program are an extension of the institution's awareness of its mission and its application to its constituencies. An institution applying for the inclusion of an occupational associate's degree program shall demonstrate that its programs and courses are appropriate to its mission and to its specific goals and objectives.

Occupational associate's degree programs should emphasize both achievement of vocational objectives and general education. This emphasis requires courses in general education that are relevant both quantitatively and qualitatively to the chosen degree.

**3-3-202. Education Requirements.** The minimum number of credits required for the occupational associate's degree shall be 60 semester hours, 90 quarter hours, or 1800 clock hours, normally earned over a period of four semesters, six quarters, or the equivalent. Transfer and award of credit may be granted for appropriate work at other institutions.

There shall be a minimum of 10 semester hours, 15 quarter hours, or their equivalent in general education or applied general education courses. The catalog must identify the courses that satisfy the general education requirements, and it must provide an explanation of the course numbering system.

The Council's expectations for general education and applied general education are outlined in the Glossary section.

**3-3-203. Curriculum.** The curriculum shall quantitatively and qualitatively approximate the standards at other institutions offering occupational associate's degrees, with due allowance for meeting special objectives. The primary purpose of the degree shall be technical in nature with courses designed to assist students in the application of these skills in the workplace. Instructional procedures, texts, materials, and technology shall be appropriate to the purposes, curriculums, and standards of institutions offering occupational associate's degrees. Evidence shall be provided that curricular offerings require appropriate use of library resources.

**3-3-204. Enrollment.** Enrollment in the second year of a two-year program must be sufficient to support regularly scheduled classes and laboratory work. Second-year work shall be based upon appropriate first-year prerequisites.

### **3-3-300 – FACULTY**

**3-3-301. Preparation.** An institution offering occupational associate's degrees shall have an adequate and competent faculty working under conditions that encourage the best efforts of each individual. In judging competence, consideration shall be given to the academic preparation and experience of each instructor.

**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. Instructors at a minimum shall have earned 15 semester or equivalent hours of coursework through a combination of hours from an associate's, bachelor's, master's, and/or doctoral level coursework in the area of their teaching assignment.
- (b) Instructors teaching general education shall hold a minimum of a master's degree. Instructors shall have a minimum of 18 semester or equivalent hours of coursework in their teaching discipline. At internationally based institutions, transcripts in languages other than English for general education instructors must be translated into English.

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.

- (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.
- (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.

**3-3-303. 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, and community relations responsibilities of the instructor.

**3-3-304. Stability.** There shall be an adequate core of full- and part-time faculty to ensure sound direction and continuity of development for the educational programs. The institution shall demonstrate through outcomes, length of service, reasonable retention of faculty, and other measures that the core faculty ensures that the institution will meet its stated mission and objectives. The institution shall promote stability in the faculty through compensation, fringe benefits, professional growth opportunities, and other incentives.

**3-3-305. Student-Teacher Ratio.** The student-teacher ratio shall be reasonable at all times in keeping with generally accepted delivery modes and course content. In determining a reasonable ratio, the institution shall consider the following factors:

- (a) the amount of lecture given by instructors in skills-building and practice classes;
- (b) the level of existing skills of the students;
- (c) the amount of direct supervision exercised by the instructor and the availability of instructional equipment in a lab setting where there is primary instruction in a specific skill; and
- (d) the use of technology in providing alternative instruction or evaluation.

### **3-3-400 – LIBRARY, INSTRUCTIONAL RESOURCES, AND TECHNOLOGY**

**3-3-401. Staff.** An individual with the ability to maintain the resources and to assist students and faculty shall be designated to oversee the resources of the institution.

**3-3-402. Budget.** An annual library budget, appropriate to the size and scope of the institution and the programs offered, shall be established and the allocation expended for the purchase of books, periodicals, library equipment, and other resource and reference materials.

**3-3-403. Function.** The library function is shaped by the educational programs of the institution. Appropriate reference, research, and information resources must be made available to enhance, augment, and support the curricular and educational offerings. The resources shall include the study, reading, and information technology facilities necessary to make the educational programs effective. The ultimate test of the library's adequacy is determined by the extent to which its resources support all the courses offered by the institutions.

**3-3-404. Use and Accessibility.** In evaluating the use of library resources by students, consideration shall be given to accessibility and to methods used by the faculty to encourage the use of these resources by students. Records of physical and/or online circulation and inventory shall be current and accurate.

Physical and/or online library materials and services must be available at times consistent with the typical student's schedule in both day and evening programs. 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. If online resources are utilized, an appropriate number of terminals shall be provided for student use. Interlibrary agreements are not substitutes for an institution's library, but rather a means to supplement the

institution's holdings in limited areas. In determining the appropriateness of such agreements, consideration will be given to the uniqueness of the lending library's collection, provisions for interlibrary loans, and the degree of accessibility to the students.

**3-3-405. *Holdings.*** The institution shall have available and easily accessible standard reference works, professional journals, and current periodicals appropriate to the curriculum. Consideration also shall be given to supplementary library resources contracted by the institution and online resources available to its student body.

**3-3-406. *Acquisitions.*** Library acquisitions are the joint responsibility of the faculty and library staff, with the greater amount of input emanating from the faculty. Moreover, it is the faculty's responsibility to inspire, motivate, and direct student usage of the library resources.

## TITLE III EVALUATION STANDARDS

# Chapter 4 Standards for Academic Associate's Degree Programs

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### 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.

#### **3-4-100 – STATE AUTHORITY**

The institution must be legally authorized by the appropriate state education agency, where such authority exists, to confer the associate's degree.

#### **3-4-200 – EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES**

**3-4-201. Objectives.** The objectives of an associate's degree program reflect the application of an institution's mission to its constituencies. An institution applying for the inclusion of an academic associate's degree program shall demonstrate that its programs, courses, and services are appropriate to its mission and to its specific goals and objectives.

Programs at collegiate institutions should emphasize both the achievement of vocational objectives and general education. This emphasis requires courses in general education that are both quantitatively and qualitatively relevant to the chosen degree.

**3-4-202. Education Requirements.** The minimum number of credits required for the academic associate's degree shall be 60 semester hours, 90 quarter hours, or their equivalent, normally earned over a period of four semesters, six quarters, or the equivalent. Transfer and award of credit for appropriate work at other institutions may be granted.

There shall be a minimum of 30 semester hours, 45 quarter hours, or their equivalent in courses within the areas of concentration; and a minimum of 15 semester hours, 22.5 quarter hours, or their equivalent in general education courses. Courses within the area of concentration of the subject matter of the program shall not be considered general education courses. The catalog must identify the courses that satisfy the concentration and general education requirements, and it must provide an explanation of the course numbering system.

General education and academic subject offerings, as distinguished from the professional or vocational offerings of a collegiate institution, shall place emphasis on principles and theory and not on practical applications associated with a particular occupation or profession. General education courses give balance to the total program and must be appropriate for the program and the needs of the students. The Council's expectations for general education, humanities, mathematics and the sciences, and social sciences are outlined in the Glossary section.

**3-4-203. Curriculum.** The curriculum shall quantitatively and qualitatively approximate the standards at other collegiate institutions offering academic associate's degrees. It should help students acquire necessary skills such as reading, writing, communicating, critical thinking, and the basic use of computers. 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 appropriate use of library resources.

**3-4-204. Enrollment.** Enrollment in the second year of a two-year program must be sufficient to support regularly scheduled classes and laboratory work. Second-year work shall be based upon appropriate first-year prerequisites.

### **3-4-300 – FACULTY**

**3-4-301. Preparation.** The institution shall have an adequate and competent faculty working under conditions that encourage the best efforts of each individual. In judging competence, consideration shall be given to the academic preparation and experience of each instructor.

**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 minimum of a master's degree. Instructors at a minimum shall have earned 18 semester or equivalent hours of coursework in the area of their teaching discipline. At internationally based institutions, transcripts in languages other than English for general education instructors must be translated into English.

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.

**3-4-303. 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, and community relations responsibilities of the instructor.

**3-4-304. Stability.** There shall be an adequate core of full- and part-time faculty to ensure sound direction and continuity of development for the educational programs. The institution shall demonstrate through outcomes, length of service, reasonable retention of faculty, and other measures that the core faculty ensures that the institution will meet its stated mission and objectives. The institution shall promote stability in the faculty through compensation, fringe benefits, professional growth opportunities, and other incentives.

### **3-4-400 – LIBRARY, INSTRUCTIONAL RESOURCES, AND TECHNOLOGY**

**3-4-401. Staff.** A professionally trained individual shall supervise and manage library and instructional resources, facilitate their integration into all phases of the institution's curricular and educational offerings, and assist students in their use. A professionally trained individual is one who holds a bachelor's or master's degree in library or information science or a comparable program, or state certification to work as a librarian, where applicable, or, for foreign institutions, who holds a bachelor's or master's degree recognized as appropriate for the position by its government or higher education authority. The institution must provide evidence that the degree is from an institution accredited by an agency recognized by the United States Department of Education. If the degree is from an institution outside of the United States, the institution must be recognized by its government as an institution of higher education or be evaluated by a member of the Association of International Credentials Evaluators (AICE), the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (AACRAO), or the National Association of Credential Evaluation Services (NACES) to determine the equivalency of the degree to degrees awarded by institutions in the United States. ACICS, if unable to determine qualifications, may require the translation and/or evaluation of transcripts in languages other than English. The professionally trained individual must participate in documented professional growth activities.

During library hours that are scheduled and posted, there shall be a trained individual on-site who is assigned to oversee and to supervise the library and to assist students with library and information services. This individual shall be competent and technologically literate to use and to aid in the use of the library technologies and resources.

**3-4-402. Budget.** An annual library budget, appropriate to the size and scope of the institution and the programs offered, shall be established and the allocation expended for the purchase of books, periodicals, library equipment, and other resource and reference materials.

**3-4-403. Function.** The library function is shaped by the educational programs of the college. Appropriate reference, research, and information resources must be made available to provide basic support for curricular and educational offerings and to enhance student learning.

**3-4-404. Use and Accessibility.** The faculty should inspire, motivate, and direct student usage of the library resources. The library's adequacy ultimately is determined by the extent to which physical and/or online resources including full-text resources support all the courses offered by the institution.

For library resources, the Dewey Decimal System, Library of Congress classification system, or other appropriate system of classification should be used. Records of physical and/or online circulation and inventory shall be current and accurate and must be maintained to assist staff and faculty in evaluating the adequacy and utilization of the physical and/or online resources including full-text holdings.

Physical and/or online, full-text library materials and services must be available at times consistent with the typical student's schedule in both day and evening programs. If computer software is utilized on site, a sufficient number of terminals shall be provided for student use. If interlibrary agreements are in effect, provisions for such use must be

practical and accessible and use must be documented. In determining the appropriateness of such agreements, consideration will be given to the nature of the participating library's collection, provisions for interlibrary loans, and the degree of accessibility to the students. A college's library must contain, at a minimum, a core collection of physical and/or online resources including full-text reference materials appropriate for the offerings of the institution.

**3-4-405. *Holdings.*** A collegiate library shall contain up-to-date physical and/or online resources including full-text titles appropriate for the size of the institution and the breadth of and enrollment in its educational programs. The library collection shall include holdings on the Humanities, Arts, Social Sciences, and Sciences, including mathematics; magazines and essential professional journals and periodicals; and, when appropriate, online data networks and retrieval systems, CD-ROMs, and interactive research systems that support the offerings of the institution.

**3-4-406. *Acquisitions.*** Library acquisitions are the joint responsibility of the faculty and library staff, with the greater amount of input emanating from the faculty.



# TITLE III EVALUATION STANDARDS

## Chapter 5 Standards for Bachelor's Degree Programs

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### 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.

#### 3-5-100 – STATE AUTHORITY

The institution must be legally authorized by the appropriate state education agency, where such authority exists, to confer the bachelor's degree.

#### 3-5-200 – EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES

**3-5-201. Objectives.** The objectives of a bachelor's degree program reflect the application of an institution's mission to its constituencies. An institution applying for the inclusion of a bachelor's degree program shall demonstrate that its programs, courses, and services are appropriate to its mission and to its specific goals and objectives.

Programs at collegiate institutions should emphasize both the achievement of vocational objectives and general education. This emphasis requires courses in general education that are both quantitatively and qualitatively relevant to the chosen degree.

**3-5-202. Education Requirements.** The minimum number of credits required for the bachelor's degree shall be 120 semester hours, 180 quarter hours, or their equivalent, normally earned over a period of eight semesters, 12 quarters, or their equivalent. Transfer and award of credit for appropriate work at other institutions may be granted.

There shall be a minimum of 60 semester hours, 90 quarter hours, or their equivalent within the areas of concentration; and a minimum of 36 semester hours, 54 quarter hours, or their equivalent in general education courses. Courses within the area of concentration of the subject matter of the program shall not be considered general education courses. The catalog must identify the courses that satisfy the concentration and general education requirements and those that are upper-division courses, and it must provide an explanation of the course numbering system. The catalog must state the expectations for all four years of the bachelor's degree curriculum and comply with Appendix C, Guidelines for Institutional Publications. If the institution offers only the last two years of the bachelor's degree program, the catalog and all advertising materials must clearly describe the requirements for admission, including requirements for the completion of necessary prerequisite courses and general education courses to ensure that the student will complete all of the requirements for the bachelor's degree upon graduation.

General education and academic subject offerings, as distinguished from the professional or vocational offerings of a collegiate institution, shall place emphasis on principles and theory and not on practical applications associated with a particular occupation or profession. General education courses give balance to the total program and must be appropriate for the program and the needs of the students. The Council's expectations for general education, humanities, mathematics and the sciences, and social sciences are outlined in the Glossary section.

**3-5-203. Curriculum.** The curriculum shall quantitatively and qualitatively approximate the standards at other collegiate institutions offering bachelor's degrees. It should help students acquire necessary skills such as reading, writing, communicating, critical thinking, and the basic use of computers. 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 appropriate use of library resources.

**3-5-204. Enrollment.** Enrollment in upper-division courses must be sufficient to support regularly scheduled and conducted classes and laboratory work. Upper-division work shall be offered and shall be based upon appropriate prerequisites.

### **3-5-300 – FACULTY**

**3-5-301. Preparation.** The institution shall have an adequate and competent faculty working under conditions that encourage the best efforts of each individual. In judging competence, consideration shall be given to the academic preparation and experience of each instructor.

**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 minimum of a master's degree. Instructors at a minimum shall have earned 18 semester or equivalent hours of coursework in the area of their teaching discipline. At internationally based institutions, transcripts in languages other than English for general education instructors must be translated into English.

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. 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.

**3-5-303. 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, and community relations responsibilities of the instructor.

**3-5-304. Stability.** There shall be an adequate core of full- and part-time faculty to ensure sound direction and continuity of development for the educational programs. The institution shall demonstrate through outcomes, length of service, reasonable retention of faculty, and other measures that the core faculty ensures that the institution will meet its stated mission and objectives. The institution shall promote stability in the faculty through compensation, fringe benefits, professional growth opportunities, and other incentives.

### **3-5-400 – LIBRARY, INSTRUCTIONAL RESOURCES, AND TECHNOLOGY**

**3-5-401. Staff.** A professionally trained individual shall supervise and manage library and instructional resources, facilitate their integration into all phases of the institution's curricular and educational offerings, and assist students in their use. A professionally trained individual is one who holds a bachelor's or master's degree in library or information science or a comparable program, or state certification to work as a librarian, where applicable, or, for foreign institutions, who holds a bachelor's or master's degree recognized as appropriate for the position by its government or higher education authority. The institution must provide evidence that the degree is from an institution accredited by an agency recognized by the United States Department of Education. If the degree is from an institution outside of the United States, the institution must be recognized by its government as an institution of higher education or be evaluated by a member of the Association of International Credentials Evaluators (AICE), the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (AACRAO), or the National Association of Credential Evaluation Services (NACES) to determine the equivalency of the degree to degrees awarded by institutions in the United States. ACICS, if unable to determine qualifications, may require the translation and/or evaluation of transcripts in languages other than English. The professional trained individual must participate in documented professional growth activities.

During library hours that are scheduled and posted, there shall be a trained individual on-site who is assigned to oversee and to supervise the library and to assist students with library and information services. This individual shall be competent and technologically literate to use and to aid in the use of the library technologies and resources.

**3-5-402. Budget.** An annual library budget, appropriate to the size and scope of the institution and the programs offered, shall be established and the allocation expended for the purchase of books, periodicals, library equipment, and other resource and reference materials.

**3-5-403. Function.** The library function is shaped by the educational programs of the college. Appropriate reference, research, and information resources must be made available to provide basic support for curricular and educational offerings and to enhance student learning.

**3-5-404. Use and Accessibility.** The faculty should inspire, motivate, and direct student usage of the library resources. The library's adequacy ultimately is determined by the extent to which physical and/or online resources including full-text resources support all the courses offered by the institution.

For library resources, the Dewey Decimal System, Library of Congress classification system, or other appropriate system of classification should be used. Records of physical and/or online circulation and inventory shall be current and accurate and must be maintained to assist staff and faculty in evaluating the adequacy and utilization of the physical and/or online resources including full-text holdings.

Physical and/or online, full-text library materials and services must be available at times consistent with the typical student's schedule in both day and evening programs. If computer software is utilized on site, a sufficient number of terminals shall be provided for student use. If interlibrary agreements are in effect, provisions for such use must be practical and accessible and use must be documented. In determining the appropriateness of such agreements, consid-

eration will be given to the nature of the participating library's collection, provisions for interlibrary loans, and the degree of accessibility to the students. A college's library must contain, at a minimum, a core collection of physical and/or online resources including full-text reference materials appropriate for the offerings of the institution.

**3-5-405. *Holdings.*** A collegiate library shall contain up-to-date physical and/or online resources including full-text titles appropriate for the size of the institution and the breadth of and enrollment in its educational programs. The library collection shall include holdings on the Humanities, Arts, Social Sciences, and Sciences, including mathematics; magazines and professional journals and periodicals; and, when appropriate, online data networks and retrieval systems, CD-ROMs, and interactive research systems that support the offerings of the institution.

**3-5-406. *Acquisitions.*** Library acquisitions are the joint responsibility of the faculty and library staff, with the greater amount emanating from the faculty.

**INTRODUCTION**

In addition to the general standards in Chapter 1, which apply to all institutions, the following standards apply specifically to master's degree programs.

**3-6-100 – NATURE OF GRADUATE EDUCATION**

The awarding of a master's degree signifies that, in the judgment of the faculty, the student has attained specialized competence which qualifies the recipient for opportunities and additional responsibilities not ordinarily available to the baccalaureate degree recipient. To make a graduate program distinctive, a component designed to teach research skills should be included.

**3-6-200 – STATE AUTHORITY**

The institution must be legally authorized by the appropriate state education agency, where such authority exists, to confer the master's degree.

**3-6-300 – ORGANIZATION AND ADMINISTRATION**

**3-6-301. *Committee Oversight.*** The responsibility for developing, modifying, and maintaining the graduate program shall be performed by a qualified designated committee to include, but not restricted to, students, faculty, administrators, and employers.

**3-6-302. *Program Administration.*** The administration of the graduate program shall be performed by a qualified individual with appropriate administrative and educational background and experience for the direction of a graduate program. The duties of this individual may be full- or part-time with adequate staff support.

**3-6-400 – EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES**

**3-6-401. *Objectives.*** The objectives of a master's degree program reflect the application of an institution's mission to its constituencies. An institution applying for the inclusion of a master's degree program shall demonstrate that its programs, courses, and services are appropriate to its mission and to its specific goals and objectives. Master's degree programs should emphasize both mastery of subject matter and an understanding of related research and research methodology. This emphasis implies development of the student's ability to integrate and apply the subject matter.

**3-6-402. *Program Development.*** Graduate faculty must be directly involved in the development and modification of master's degree program policies, procedures, and curricula. Flexible instructional approaches and scheduling patterns are encouraged in developing innovative graduate programs in order to serve varying student groups and their special needs.

**3-6-403. Education Requirements.** The minimum number of credits required for the master's degree shall be 30 semester hours, 45 quarter hours, or their equivalent, of course work plus a thesis at the graduate level; or 36 semester hours, 54 quarter hours, or their equivalent, of course work at the graduate level if a thesis is not required. The master's degree normally is earned over three semesters, five quarters, or the equivalent. The catalog must provide an explanation of the course numbering system.

**3-6-404. Curriculum.** The curriculum shall quantitatively and qualitatively approximate the standards at other institutions offering master's 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 library resources.

**3-6-405. Enrollment.** Enrollment in graduate-level courses must be sufficient to support regularly scheduled and conducted classes and laboratory work. Graduate-level courses shall be offered and shall be based on appropriate prerequisites.

### **3-6-500 – FACULTY**

**3-6-501. Preparation.** The institution shall have an adequate and competent faculty working under conditions that encourage the best efforts of each individual. In judging competence of faculty, consideration shall be given to the academic preparation and experience of each instructor.

**3-6-502. Assignments.** Instructors shall be assigned in terms of their major and minor areas of academic preparation and related experience. The size of the faculty shall be appropriate for the graduate enrollment. All master's program faculty should have appropriate graduate degrees, and the number with terminal degrees should be appropriate for the graduate enrollment. At least one-half of the graduate-level courses are to be taught by faculty possessing terminal degrees. Professional certification is not a substitute for a terminal degree. The institution also should encourage graduate faculty members to engage in scholarly research and to publish in professional journals.

Faculty who do not possess appropriate graduate degrees may be assigned to teach in master's degree programs if they have exceptional practical or professional experience in the assigned field or if the assigned field is one in which graduate degrees are not widely available. In either case, the burden is on the institution to demonstrate and justify the qualifications of the faculty to teach their assigned courses. Faculty assigned under this exception are not considered to have the equivalent of a terminal degree.

**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.

**3-6-504. Stability.** There shall be an adequate core of full- and part-time faculty to ensure sound direction and continuity of development for the educational programs. The institution shall demonstrate through outcomes, length of service, reasonable retention of faculty, and other measures that the core faculty ensures that the institution will meet its stated mission and objectives. The institution shall promote stability in the faculty through compensation, fringe benefits, professional growth opportunities, and other incentives.

### 3-6-600 – ADMISSIONS

**3-6-601. *Enrollment Prerequisites.*** The threshold admission requirement to a master's degree program is a baccalaureate degree.

If admission to a professional program is granted without a baccalaureate degree, the burden is on the institution to demonstrate and justify that the alternate admission requirement is accepted by a recognized licensing or specialized accrediting agency and is common practice among accredited institutions of higher education. In such cases, admission may be granted only to eligible students who have completed, at a minimum, an associate's degree or equivalent. If the institution chooses to award a suitable baccalaureate degree upon completion of specified requirements or concurrently with the award of the professional master's degree, the baccalaureate degree curriculum must be approved by the Council.

**3-6-602. *Evaluation of Applicants.*** Institutions should use appropriate techniques to evaluate applicants and to determine whether they have the academic qualifications to benefit from graduate study.

**3-6-603. *Transfer of Credit.*** Transfer of credit for appropriate master's-level course work from another institution may be granted according to the policy established by the institution. No more than one-half of the credits required for the master's degree may be transferred from another institution.

**3-6-604. *Conformance to Institutional Objectives.*** Admissions procedures, transfer policies, and requirements for graduation shall be consistent with the overall philosophy and objectives of the institution.

### 3-6-700 – LIBRARY, INSTRUCTIONAL RESOURCES, AND TECHNOLOGY

**3-6-701. *Staff.*** A professionally trained individual shall supervise and manage library and instructional resources, facilitate their integration into all phases of the institution's curricular and educational offerings, and assist students in their use. A professionally trained individual is one with special qualifications to aid students in research and who holds a M.L.S. degree or the equivalent, or, for foreign institutions, who holds a master's degree recognized as appropriate for the position by its government or higher education authority. The institution must provide evidence that the degree is from an institution accredited by an agency recognized by the United States Department of Education. If the degree is from an institution outside of the United States, the institution must be recognized by its government as an institution of higher education or be evaluated by a member of the Association of International Credentials Evaluators (AICE), the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (AACRAO), or the National Association of Credential Evaluation Services (NACES) to determine the equivalency of the degree to degrees awarded by institutions in the United States. ACICS, if unable to determine qualifications, may require the translation and/or evaluation of transcripts in languages other than English. The professionally trained individual must participate in documented professional growth activities.

There shall be a professionally trained individual on duty for sufficient hours, as published by the institution, to support the programs and to assist students with library functions and research. This individual shall be competent both to use and to aid in the use of the library technologies and resources.

**3-6-702. *Budget.*** An annual library budget, appropriate to the size and scope of the institution and the programs offered, shall be established and the allocation expended for the purchase of books, periodicals, library equipment, and other resource and reference materials.

**3-6-703. *Function.*** The library function is shaped by the educational programs of the institution. Institutions offering master's degree programs shall provide access to substantially different library resources in terms of their depth and breadth from those required for baccalaureate degree programs.

These resources shall include bibliographic and monographic references, major professional journals and reference services, research and methodology materials, and, as appropriate, information technologies. The depth and breadth of the accessible library holdings shall be such as to exceed the requirements of the average student in order to encourage the intellectual development of superior students and to enrich the professional development of the faculty.

Appropriate reference, research, and information resources must be made available to enhance, augment, and support the curricular and educational offerings and to enhance student learning. The resources shall include the study, reading, and information technology facilities necessary to make the educational programs effective.

**3-6-704. *Use and Accessibility.*** It is the faculty's responsibility to inspire, motivate, and direct student usage of the library resources. The library's adequacy ultimately is determined by the extent to which physical and/or online, full-text resources support all the courses offered by the institution.

For library resources, the Dewey Decimal System, Library of Congress classification system, or other appropriate system of classification should be used. Records of physical and/or online circulation and inventory shall be current and accurate and must be maintained to assist staff and faculty in evaluating the adequacy and utilization of the physical and/or online, full-text holdings.

Physical and/or online, full-text library materials and services must be available at times consistent with the typical student's schedule in both day and evening programs. If computer software is utilized on site, a sufficient number of terminals shall be provided for student use. If interlibrary agreements are in effect, provisions for such use must be practical and accessible and use must be documented. In determining the appropriateness of such agreements, consideration will be given to the uniqueness of the lending library's collection, provisions for interlibrary loans, and the degree of accessibility to the students. A college's library must contain, at a minimum, a core collection of physical and/or on-line, full-text reference materials appropriate for the offerings of the institution.

**3-6-705. *Holdings.*** The library shall support the academic programs and the intellectual and cultural development of students, faculty, and staff; shall provide current and appropriate physical and/or online, full-text resources for the size of the institution and the breadth of and enrollment in its educational programs; shall provide, when appropriate, on-line data networks and retrieval systems, CD-ROMs, and interactive research systems; and shall be capable of supporting an understanding of scholarly research and/or scholarly research at the graduate level.

**3-6-706. *Acquisitions.*** Library acquisitions are the joint responsibility of the faculty and library staff, with the greater amount of input emanating from the faculty.

### **3-6-800 – PUBLICATIONS**

There shall be a separate section in the institution's catalog describing the master's degree objectives, program requirements, admissions procedures, transfer policies, graduation requirements, regulations, and course descriptions.



## Chapter 7

Standards for Doctoral Degree Programs

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## INTRODUCTION

In addition to the general standards in Chapter 1, which apply to all institutions, the following standards apply specifically to doctorate degree programs, and are being applied as part of a pilot project. The current scope of recognition 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 doctorate 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 doctorate 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 doctorate 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. 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 research project, or dissertation, or other required academic activities. A doctoral degree program is further designed to provide the mastery of a subject, theory, and methodology in a specific field of study. The program shall have a strategic plan that describes the purpose of the program, provides guidance about its future, and identified measures used to define its success.

**3-7-200 – STATE AUTHORITY**

The institution must be legally authorized by the appropriate state or national education agency, where such authority exists, to confer the doctorate degree.

**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.

**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 externship 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 research to issues related to the discipline and its knowledge base as used in industry.

**3-7-402. *Program Development.*** Doctoral faculty must be directly involved in the development and modification of a doctorate degree program's policies, procedures, and curricula. Flexible instructional approaches and scheduling patterns are encouraged in developing innovative doctoral degree programs to serve varying students and their needs. The learning objectives must be advanced and provide the depth of practical learning or research.

**3-7-403. *Education Requirements.*** The number of credits required for the doctoral degree shall be, at a minimum, 90 semester hours, 135 quarter hours, or their equivalent, of course work beyond the bachelor's degree. If a master's degree in the same field of study, earned at an institution accredited by an agency recognized by the U.S. Department of Education, is required as a prerequisite for admission to the doctorate degree program, the number of credits required for the doctorate degree shall be, at a minimum, 54 semester hours, 81 quarter hours, or their equivalent. This includes credit for the research project/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.

**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 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 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 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.

**3-7-405. Enrollment.** Enrollment must be sufficient to support regularly scheduled and conducted classes and coursework. Doctorate-level courses shall be offered and shall be based on appropriate prerequisites.

### **3-7-500 – FACULTY**

**3-7-501. Preparation.** The institution shall have an adequate and competent faculty working under conditions that encourage the best efforts of each individual. In judging competence of faculty, consideration shall be given to the academic preparation and experience of each instructor.

**3-7-502. Assignments.** All doctoral degree courses shall be taught by faculty possessing doctoral or terminal professional degrees, related to the courses taught, from accredited or government-recognized international institutions. These individuals also must demonstrate expertise in the field of study taught, possess applicable professional experience for participating in a doctoral degree program, and maintain current professional certification in their discipline, where applicable.

Faculty shall be assigned in terms of their major and minor areas of academic preparation, related professional experience, and appropriate required professional certification to practice in the field. The size of the faculty shall be appropriate for the enrollment in the program. The institution shall demonstrate that faculty members are engaged in practical or scholarly research and are encouraged to publish in professional journals.

**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.

**3-7-504. *Stability.*** The proportion of faculty employed on a full-time basis shall be sufficient to ensure sound direction and continuity of development for the educational programs. The institution shall demonstrate through outcomes and other measures that the proportion of full-time faculty and the faculty's average length of service to the institution allow the institution to meet its stated mission. The institution shall promote stability in the faculty through compensation, fringe benefits, professional growth opportunities, and other incentives.

### **3-7-600 – ADMISSIONS**

**3-7-601. *Enrollment Prerequisites.*** The threshold admission requirement to a doctorate degree program is, as appropriate, a bachelor's or master's degree earned from an appropriately accredited institution recognized by the U.S. Department of Education. A specific enrollment agreement must be established for the doctorate degree program.

**3-7-602. *Evaluation of Applicants.*** Institutions should use appropriate techniques to evaluate applicants and to determine whether they have the academic qualifications to 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.*** 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. If the prerequisites for admission to the doctorate program is a master's degree in the same field of study earned at an institution accredited by an agency recognized by the U.S. Department of Education, a maximum of 36 semester hours, or 54 quarter hours, or their equivalent may be granted as transfer credits according to the policy established by the institution. In all other cases, no more than 20% for the doctorate degree may be transferred from another institution. Academic credit shall not be awarded for experiential learning activity.

**3-7-604. *Conformance to Institutional Objectives.*** Admissions procedures, transfer policies, and requirements for graduation shall be consistent with the overall philosophy, mission, and objectives of the institution.

**3-7-700 – LIBRARY, INSTRUCTIONAL RESOURCES, AND TECHNOLOGY**

**3-7-701. Staff.** A professionally trained individual shall supervise and manage library and instructional resources, facilitate their integration into all phases of the institution's curricular and educational offerings, and assist students in their use. A professionally trained individual is one with special qualifications to aid students in research and who holds a M.L.S. degree or the equivalent, or, for foreign institutions, who holds a master's degree recognized as appropriate for the position by its government or higher education authority. The institution must provide evidence that the degree is from an institution accredited by an agency recognized by the United States Department of Education. If the degree is from an institution outside of the United States, the institution must be recognized by its government as an institution of higher education or be evaluated by a member of the Association of International Credentials Evaluators (AICE), the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (AACRAO), or the National Association of Credential Evaluation Services (NACES) to determine the equivalency of the degree to degrees awarded by institutions in the United States. ACICS, if unable to determine qualifications, may require the translation and/or evaluation of transcripts in languages other than English. The professionally trained individual must participate in documented professional growth activities.

There shall be a professionally trained individual on duty for sufficient hours, as published by the institution, to support the programs and to assist students with library functions and research. This individual shall be competent both to use and to aid in the use of the library technologies and resources.

**3-7-702. Budget.** An annual library budget, appropriate to the size and scope of the institution and the programs offered, shall be established and the allocation expended for the purchase of books, periodicals, library equipment, and other resource and reference materials.

**3-7-703. Function.** The library function is shaped by the educational programs of the institution. Institutions offering doctorate degree programs shall provide access to resources which enhance, support, and are influential to research activities conducted with regard to the field of study.

These resources shall include bibliographic and monographic references, major professional and scholarly journals and reference services, research and methodology materials, and, as appropriate, information technologies. The depth and breadth of the accessible library holdings shall be such as to exceed the requirements of the student to encourage the intellectual development of students and to enrich the professional development of the faculty.

Appropriate reference, research, and information resources must be made available to enhance, augment, and support the curricular and educational offerings and to enhance student learning. The resources shall include the study, reading, and information technology facilities necessary to make the educational programs effective.

**3-7-704. Use and Accessibility.** Faculty are responsible for inspiring, motivating, and directing student usage of the library resources. The library's adequacy ultimately is determined by the extent to which physical and/or on-line, full-text resources support all the courses offered by the institution. For library resources, the Dewey Decimal System, Library of Congress classification system, or other appropriate system of classification should be used. Records of physical and/or on-line circulation and inventory shall be current and accurate and must be maintained to assist staff and faculty in evaluating the adequacy and utilization of the holdings.

Physical and/or on-line, full-text library materials and services must be available at times consistent with the typical student's schedule in both day and evening programs. If computer software is utilized, a sufficient number of termi-

nals shall be provided for student use. If interlibrary agreements are in effect, provisions for such use must be practical and accessible and use must be documented. In determining the appropriateness of such agreements, consideration will be given to the uniqueness of the lending library's collection, provisions for interlibrary loans, and the degree of accessibility to the students. A college's library must contain, at a minimum, a core collection of physical and/or on-line reference materials appropriate for the offerings of the institution.

**3-7-705. *Holdings.*** The library shall support the academic programs and the intellectual and cultural development of students, faculty, and staff; shall provide current and appropriate resources for the size of the institution and the breadth of and enrollment in its educational programs; shall provide, when appropriate, physical and/or on-line, full-text data networks and retrieval systems, CD-ROMs, and interactive research systems; and shall be capable of supporting scholarly research at the graduate level.

**3-7-706. *Acquisitions.*** Library acquisitions are the joint responsibility of the faculty and library staff, with the greater amount of input emanating from the faculty.

### **3-7-800 – PUBLICATIONS**

There shall be a separate section in the institution's catalog describing the doctorate degree program requirements, admissions procedures, transfer policies, graduation requirements, regulations, and course descriptions.

## GLOSSARY OF DEFINITIONS

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*The following definitions are provided in order to assist institutions in understanding and interpreting the Accreditation Criteria. The definitions include some of the most commonly used terms and are defined to reflect their most common usage. These normative definitions drawn from no single source are offered by way of example rather than limitation. The Council recognizes the evolving and dynamic nature of American postsecondary education. It has no intention of imposing rigid expectations. When an institution departs from these norms it may be called upon to defend the academic integrity of the questioned activity.*

**Ability to Benefit.** A determination made by the institution that, in the absence of a high school diploma or GED certificate, the student will be able to benefit, with or without remediation, from the program(s) offered at the institution. The determination should be made before the person is financially obligated or enrolled in a program.

**Academic Probation.** Students placed on academic probation are subject to increased scrutiny of their academic achievements due to a previous history of academic difficulty. The probation policy must define the conditions of probation, including how long a student may remain on probation and the requirements for being removed from probation. The institution may establish additional policies as it desires.

**Academic Credential.** A certificate, diploma, or degree stating that the student has been graduated from a certain curriculum or has passed certain subjects.

**Academic Year.** A period of time generally divided into two semesters, three quarters, or their equivalent, in which a full-time student is expected to complete the coursework equivalent to at least two semesters, three quarters, or their equivalent.

**Accreditation.** The process whereby a nationally recognized agency or organization grants public recognition to a unit of an educational organization (such as a school, institute, college, university, or specialized program of study) indicating that it meets established standards of quality as determined through initial and periodic self-study and evaluation by peers. The essential purpose of the accreditation process is to provide a professional judgment as to quality of the educational institution or program(s) offered and to encourage continual improvement thereof.

**Achievement Test.** A test which measures a student's existing skills and knowledge (that which has been taught to the student) in particular areas such as reading, math, map skills, grammar, etc.

**Additional Location.** See Campus, Branch.

**Aptitude Test.** Aptitude and its tests refer to the ability/potential to do schoolwork in different areas such as mechanics, art, clerical procedures, verbal, and numerical ability. (Important factors such as home environment, familiarity with the English language, and physical and psychological well-being at the time of the test all affect this kind of measure.) Aptitude tests often are timed, often are multiple choice, and are "normed" for cutoff score on a nationwide sampling of students.

**Applied General Education.** Applied general education is defined as courses that involve the application of principles and concepts in communications, humanities and fine arts, mathematics, natural and physical sciences, social and behavioral sciences, and technology to the practical affairs of a specific occupation or occupational cluster. Applied general education courses enhance the ability of an individual to apply academic and occupational skills in the workplace. Examples of applied general education courses include technical writing, business writing, business statistics, business mathematics, organizational behavior, and human relations.

**Area of Concentration.** In a degree program, the focus of study. Also known as the major. The requirements for the major or area of concentration are based upon clearly defined and articulated learning objectives, including a mastery

of the knowledge, methods, and theories pertinent to a particular area of inquiry, discipline, or field. General education and other courses not related to the major do not qualify as concentration coursework.

**Articulation.** An understanding or agreement between institutions to accommodate the movement of students and the transfer of credits between institutions.

**Asynchronous Interactions.** Teaching/learning interactions between students and instructors which take place intermittently or non-simultaneously with a time delay.

**Audioconferencing.** Structured voice-only teaching/learning interaction among individuals or groups in two or more sites.

**Blended Course or Blended Learning.** A course or learning activity that combines online and face-to-face, in-class sessions. Also called “hybrid” course or learning.

**Bulletin Board System (BBS).** A computer-based online community which allows participants to interact with each other through text messages.

**Calendar.** The system by which the institution structures its school (academic) year. The three common types of calendars are the semester, the quarter, and the trimester. The semester calendar is generally composed of two semesters of 15 to 17 weeks of classes each, including final examinations. The quarter calendar is generally composed of three quarters, usually with 10 to 12 weeks of classes each, including final examinations. The summer quarter is sometimes subdivided into terms of shorter length. The trimester calendar is composed of three 15-week terms including final examinations. The third may be subdivided.

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

**Campus, Branch.** A branch campus is a location of an institution that is geographically apart and independent of the main campus of that institution, but under the same corporate structure as the main campus (i.e., part of the main campus corporation or a wholly owned subsidiary). The branch campus is permanent in nature, offers courses in educational programs leading to a degree, certificate, or other recognized educational credential, and has its own budget, faculty, administrative staff and supervisory organization.

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

**Campus Addition.** See Learning Site

**Category Grant.** An institutionally financed award to all students who qualify by meeting the published standards for a grant to similarly circumstanced students, such as a grant to active members of the military.

**Certificate.** A document issued to evidence completion of a course, seminar, or an academic program. An academic program awarding a certificate is usually shorter in length than a program resulting in a diploma. See definition of a Diploma.

**Chat Room.** An online or virtual meeting space for multiple learners to engage in real-time text-based discussions.

**Clock (or Contact) Hour.** A minimum of 50 minutes of supervised or directed instruction and appropriate break(s).

**Community Resources.** A variety of individuals, organizations, or businesses that provide information, guidance, or support to a specific program of study or career opportunity, such as professional and trade associations, employers, and guest speakers.



**Competency-based Program.** See also Direct Assessment Competency-based Programs. A competency-based program clearly defines the skills, knowledge and professional behavior (“soft skills”) that are required for a student or a graduate to perform at a level considered to be “competent” by practitioners and employers in the field. It focuses on direct, not indirect, assessment methods to measure student learning in lieu of in-class seat time, credit hours, or clock hours. It utilizes a robust curriculum development process and comprehensively specifies how qualified faculty and/or other eligible experts in the field would directly assess the achievement of required competencies and student learning.

**Competency Test.** A test with pre-established standards to measure performance. An example would be a spelling component consisting of ten questions where a score of seven or more is passing. The cutoff “pass-fail” point is referred to as criterion referenced. Usually used for promotion or graduation purposes, these tests are not standardized nationally.

**Computer-Assisted Instruction (CAI).** A type of self-paced instruction that uses the computer as the primary medium for tutorials, drills, repetitive practice, simulation, or games.

**Connect Time.** The amount of time that an online student has been logged on to the education provider’s computer or server for a particular session. The connect time may be used by a school to monitor an online student’s “attendance” and participation in a class session.

**Course.** A single subject described in an institutional catalog or bulletin.

**Credit.** (1) The quantitative measurement assigned to a course generally stated in semester hours, quarter hours, or clock hours. (2) The recognition awarded upon successful completion of coursework.

**Credit Conversion.** The process of converting units of credit based on one kind of calendar to units based on another kind of calendar. For example, the three most common calendars convert as follows: quarter hours multiplied by two-thirds equal semester hours; semester hours multiplied by one and one-half equal quarter hours; and trimester hours are equal to semester hours unless the trimester is of less than 15 weeks' duration, in which case the number of weeks and length of class sessions must be considered. While the institution may present itself as credit-without-term, one of the three traditional calendars must be used.

**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 outside preparation, two hours of laboratory experience, or three hours of externship, 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 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 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.

**Credit Hour, Trimester.** A minimum fifteen-week term. Trimester credits are equivalent to semester credits.

**Curriculum.** A program of courses fulfilling the requirements for a certificate, diploma, or degree in a particular field of study. (See definition of Program.)

**Degree.** Credential awarded as official recognition for the successful completion of an academic program.

**Degree, Advanced.** A degree beyond the bachelor's degree (e.g., M.A., M.S., M.B.A., Ph.D.).

**Degree, Associate.** The academic credential granted upon successful completion of an educational program of generally two but less than four years of full-time equivalent college-level work including a minimum number of credits as specified under Sections 3-3-202 and 3-4-202.

**Degree, Baccalaureate.** The academic credential granted upon successful completion of an educational program of four years of full-time equivalent college-level work including a minimum number of credits as specified under Section 3-5-202.

**Degree, First Professional.** The first degree signifying completion of the minimum academic requirements for practice of a profession. A first professional degree is most commonly a bachelor's degree, but is sometimes a master's or doctorate (e.g., M.L.S., J.D., M.D.).

**Degree, Graduate.** (1) In general, any degree conferred by a graduate division or a graduate school of an institution of higher education. (2) More specifically, all advanced degrees, and also all first professional degrees which are conferred by graduate schools.

**Degree, Professional Doctorate.** The degree signifying completion of the advanced academic requirements for practice of a profession. A professional doctorate degree is most commonly a practitioner-based degree beyond the master's degree level (i.e., J.D., Ed.D., DFA, DBA, etc., but excluding the Ph.D.).

**Degree, Specialized.** The credential granted upon successful completion of an educational program of at least two academic years or equivalent of college-level work which includes an emphasis on occupational and technical course work.

**Diploma.** A document issued to evidence successful completion of an academic program. A diploma is awarded for programs varying in length from only a few months to those lasting several years and awarding degrees.

**Direct Assessment Competency-based Program.** A program that clearly defines the skills, knowledge and professional behavior ("soft skills") that are required of a student or a graduate to perform at a level considered to be "competent" by practitioners and employers in the field. Only "direct" assessment of student learning and competencies are acceptable. Direct assessment measures must apply to the course competencies required for the program. Examples of "direct assessment" measures are as follows: acceptable scores on industry-recognized licensure or certification examinations; standardized tests; pre- and post-tests; examinations and quizzes; research projects; case study analysis; criterion-based rating scale or rubric scores; course-embedded questions; observation of clinical experience, internships, or field work; and capstone projects, theses, exhibits, or performances. (For a federal definition and for Council standards, see Appendix H, Section 1).

("Indirect assessment" measures of student learning, while deemed valuable for institutional program evaluation and enhancement, are not included in the consideration for approval of a competency-based program. Examples of indirect measures are: course evaluations; hours spent in classes or on out-of-class educational activities; graduate or employer satisfaction surveys; graduate placement rates; student retention rates; and student perception surveys.)

**Distance Education or Distance Learning.** A structured educational situation in which the students and instructors are physically separated. Distance education supports regular and substantive interaction synchronously or asynchronously between instructor and learner, among learners, and between learners and learning resources through one or more interactive technologies.

**Electronic Learning or E-learning.** Refers to a wide range of methodologies used in the delivery of instructional content via Internet, satellite broadcast, interactive TV, CD-Rom, etc.

**Employer Satisfaction.** Employer satisfaction and the level of satisfaction are defined by the campus based upon information collected, typically via a survey, on a regular basis from employers who have hired graduates of programs offered by the campus. Satisfaction questions should cover different aspects of career preparation in general (such as professionalism, foundational and soft skills), as well as specific skills in the particular field and the overall satisfaction of the employer with the preparation of graduates to perform tasks which utilize such skills.

**Enrollment, Full-Time Equivalent.** The equivalent number of full-time students at an established census date, equivalency being established by dividing the total student credit hours by the assumed normal individual load of credit hours.

**Externship.** A supervised practical experience that is the application of previously studied theory. Normally, three hours of work in a practical setting has the credit equivalency of one hour of classroom lecture. Under the supervision of a faculty member, a written agreement shall be developed that outlines the arrangement between the institution and the externship site, including specific learning objectives, course requirements, and evaluation criteria.

**Face-to-Face or F2F.** Refers to the traditional classroom teaching/learning environment. Also known as Instructor-led Training or ILT, on-ground training, or on-site training.

**Faculty Contact Hours.** The total hours of scheduled instructional activity spent by instructional faculty as of a specific period of time. If a course meets three hours per week for 15 weeks, it yields 45 contact hours.

**Faculty Development.** The activities by which faculty gain knowledge and skills to enhance expertise in the specific area(s) of instruction or on new curriculum concepts, theories and techniques of instruction, and educational media. The institution must demonstrate that the balance between methodology training (in-service) and content knowledge enhancement (professional growth) is appropriate for the individual faculty member. All activities must be documented. (See also “in-service training” and “professional growth”)

**Financial Aid.** Student financial assistance funded by state or federal programs and administered by the institution.

**Follow-up.** The study of any group of students or former students of the institution who have shared a common experience to determine if patterns emerge in their subsequent actions or behavior which prove useful in understanding, counseling, and establishing policies for other students; for example, a study of the number of graduates who have entered graduate schools or a study of the number of graduates who have obtained employment.

**Four-Year Institution.** (1) Literally, an institution of higher education offering four years of college-level work culminating in a bachelor's degree. (2) In common usage, distinguished from a two-year institution, and characterized by offering four or more years of coursework normally creditable toward a bachelor's or higher degree or equivalent award. In addition to coursework normally creditable toward a bachelor's or higher degree, four-year institutions may also offer other types of instruction; e.g., courses in general and continuing education, short courses, occupational curriculums leading to an associate degree, etc.

**Full-Motion Video.** Transmission of the complete action taking place at the originating site.

**General Education.** Those areas of learning which are deemed to be the common experience of all “educated” persons and must include subject matter from the humanities; mathematics and the sciences; and the social sciences.

**General Education. Humanities.** Courses in fields such as literature, philosophy, logic, foreign language, art, music, theater appreciation, and communications, including rhetoric, composition, and speech; but excluding business communications and business writing.

**General Education. Mathematics and the Sciences**—Courses such as biology, chemistry, physics, geology, astronomy, and mathematics theory and analysis, including algebra, trigonometry, geometry, calculus, and other advanced mathematics courses, but excluding business mathematics and basic computations.

**General Education. Social Sciences**—Courses such as history, economics, political science, geography, sociology, anthropology, and general psychology, but excluding courses such as practical psychology, selling techniques, and social or business behavior.

**Graduate Satisfaction.** Graduate satisfaction and the level of satisfaction are defined by the campus based upon information collected on a regular basis from students who have graduated from the programs offered by the campus. Recommended information includes the results of surveys of all graduates who left the institution at least 30 days prior to being contacted. Satisfaction questions should cover different aspects of the program and the campus as well as overall satisfaction of the graduate with the preparation provided by the campus for the position.

**Home Institution.** In a case where an institution collaborates with another entity for the delivery of distance education courses, “home institution” is the campus through which the student enrolls for the course. The Home Institution is responsible for assuring that accrediting standards are met, for providing on-campus services, and for clearly demonstrating through a formal Consortium Agreement the roles and responsibilities of the Home Institution and the Host Institution, which may deliver the distance education courses and specified online services. The Consortium Agreement must be approved by ACICS and must provide for evaluation visits to the Host Institution as may be required by ACICS.

ACICS expects the Home Institution to offer more than 50% of a program if courses are delivered under a distance education Consortium Agreement with an approved accredited institution, and to offer a minimum of 75% of a program if courses are delivered under a distance education Consortium Agreement with an approved unaccredited entity.

**Host Institution.** The institution which collaborates with an accredited institution in delivering distance education courses and specific online services as described in a formal Consortium Agreement approved by ACICS. The Consortium Agreement must provide for evaluation visits to the Host Institution as may be required by ACICS.

If the Host Institution is an approved unaccredited entity, it is subject to an evaluation visit once every three years as required by ACICS.

**Humanities.** See General Education (Humanities).

**Hybrid Course or Hybrid Program.** A hybrid course is one which mixes face-to-face, traditional classroom instruction with online instruction. A hybrid program is one which offers or requires a percentage of the required courses in a program online. ACICS requires the school to clearly outline the percentage of online activity included in a course or a program. Institutions are required to apply for and secure approval prior to initiating any distance education activity and also when it increases its distance education activity to the extent that it constitutes 50% or more of a program.

**In-Service Training.** Special planned and systematic experiences sponsored by an institution and related to curriculum and instruction that affect the majority of the faculty in a collective fashion. In-service education has as its major goal the updating of teachers in (1) subject matter, (2) curriculum concepts, (3) new theories and techniques of instruction, and (4) new educational media.

**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 learning contract signed by 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.

**Information Technology.** Method or modes of delivering training, education, or research information via current or new tele-communications technologies, such as television broadcasts, closed circuit television systems, cable television, satellite transmissions, computers and computer-based access to external learning resources, videotape and interactive video disc, audio by disc, tapes or broadcasts, and other such information and telecommunications systems that alone or in combination assist in teaching and learning.

**Institution.** A main campus and any branch campuses of that main campus. As an institutional accreditor, ACICS accredits institutions as a whole and does not separately accredit individual campuses or programs. (See Title I, Chapter 3, Introduction)

**Institution, Single Campus.** An institution that provides educational programs at one main, free-standing campus. (See Sections 1-3-201 and 2-2-201)

**Institution, Multiple Campus.** An institution that provides educational programs at one main campus and one or more branch campuses. (See Section 1-3-202)

**Institution, Distributed Enterprise.** An institution that provides educational programs at multiple locations operating within the context of a well-established and highly centralized administrative system. (See Section 1-3-203)

**Integrated Learning System or ILS.** A network system that provides a complete package of curriculum, assessment capabilities, record keeping, and other aids to monitor and manage student learning activity.

**Internship.** See Externship.

**Laboratory.** A learning environment where students apply knowledge or instruction to enhance skills and solve problems. Normally, two hours of work in a laboratory environment, under the supervision of an instructor, has the credit equivalency of one hour of classroom lecture.

**Learning Management System or LMS.** A system to manage courses created by a variety of publishers and providers. The LMS also helps the school manage online or distance education activity by providing critical reporting mechanisms.

**Learning Object.** An e-learning content module which is reusable, easily classified and stored in a data repository.

**Learning Site.** A learning site is a classroom extension of a main campus or branch campus that is apart from the managing location and is capable of providing sufficient academic and administrative oversight, providing access to all student services and instructional resources and maintaining academic quality. Learning sites used for delivery of distance education activity or collaborative arrangements with other entities for specific on-site educational activity must be approved by the Council on a case by case basis and are subject to a quality assurance visit as specified by the Council.

**Lecture.** A learning environment where a teacher instructs students in the theory, principles, or history of an academic or vocational subject. To maximally benefit from such instruction, a student is assumed to have done outside preparation. Two hours of preparation for each hour of instruction are generally assumed.

**Loan.** An advance of money, generally evidenced by a promissory note, on the agreement to repay absolutely such advance, with or without interest.

**Lower-Division Course.** Generally, a survey course that includes an introductory overview of a particular area of knowledge. These courses often do not include a prerequisite for enrollment and frequently are offered to freshmen- and sophomore-level students. Lower-division courses usually carry course numbers in the 100-299 or 1000-2999 range.

**Mathematics and the Sciences.** See General Education (Mathematics and the Sciences).

**Need-based Grant.** An institutionally financed award to a student who demonstrates a need for financial assistance in order to participate in the educational program. Need-based grants must be made available to all students on the same terms.

**Online Learning.** A term used interchangeably with Internet-based Learning, Web-based Learning, or Distance Learning.

**Outcomes, Campus.** The intended result or end result of an activity or process in the assessment of effectiveness. In determining effectiveness, campuses are required to evaluate the following outcomes: placement rates; retention rates; licensure pass rates (where applicable); employer satisfaction; graduate satisfaction; student satisfaction, and other student learning outcomes. Campuses also may use additional outcomes in evaluating effectiveness.

**Placement.** Working in the field of study or acquiring a credential that directly benefits the graduate's existing employment.

**Placement Rate.** The Placement Rate is defined by ACICS in terms of the total number of completers and graduates minus those who are not placed (employed), divided by the total number of completers and graduates, and expressed as a percent. The placement rate is calculated at both the program and campus levels, based upon data submitted for the annual Campus Accountability Report (CAR) and according to the detailed formula and terms defined in the Guidelines and Instructions for the Campus Accountability Report, which is available on the ACICS website. The detailed formula includes definitions of placed adjustments, and exclusions for students not available for placement.

**Practicum.** See Externship.

**Professional Growth.** The process by which employees gain knowledge and skills which enhance their expertise. Professional growth may be accomplished through a combination of the following activities: membership and participation in educational associations, professional organizations, continuance of education, concurrent related business experience, educational research, and awareness of current practices and standards.

Attendance at seminars, conventions, field visits, vendor shows, equipment exhibits, etc., are excellent opportunities for instructors to gain enrichment. Professional writing by an instructor is also an example of professional growth.

**Program.** A sequential grouping of courses which forms a considerable part, or all, of the requirements for an academic credential or an occupational objective. May refer to the total educational offering of an institution. See Curriculum.

**Record, Permanent Academic.** The official document on which is listed the courses attempted, grades and credit earned, and status achieved by a student.

**Record, Student.** A file which may contain the following: a record of the student's scholastic progress, the extracurricular activities, personal characteristics and experiences, family background, secondary school background, aptitudes, interests, counseling notes, etc.

**Refund.** Return of money, cancellation of obligation, or otherwise resolution of the debt.

**Regular student.** A student who is enrolled in a program leading to a certificate, diploma, or degree at an institution and is satisfactorily progressing toward program completion in compliance with the Standards of Satisfactory Progress as stated in Sections 3-1-420 through 3-1-423. Any other student attending the institution is considered in an extended enrollment status and is not eligible for government student aid.

**Retention Rate.** The Retention Rate is defined by ACICS in terms of the total student enrollment, minus those students who withdraw, divided by the total student enrollment and expressed as a percent. The retention rate is calculated at both the program and campus levels, based upon data submitted for the annual Campus Accountability Report (CAR) and according to the detailed formula and terms defined in the Guidelines and Instructions for the

Campus Accountability Report, which is available on the ACICS website. The detailed formula includes definitions, adjustments, and exclusions for calculating total enrollment and withdrawals.

**Scalability.** Provisions available for a computer application to handle expansions in size, volume, or number of users without undue disruption.

**Self-paced Instruction.** An educational delivery method by which a student progresses through a course or program of study in residence utilizing either computer software or instructional materials and resources. Students progress through the course or program at their own pace with limited interaction with the instructor. The instructor, however, is responsible for overseeing the progress of the student and for evaluating and grading the student.

**Scholarship.** (1) The quality of a student's achievement in the student's studies. (2) A financial award which does not involve repayment. A scholarship may be institutionally financed or funded by a third party. It is awarded by the institution in accordance with published standards which describe student qualifications and the source of funding. Reasons for the award may include one or more qualifications such as the student's performance (or potential for performance) in the educational program of the institution, financial need, talents sought or service valued by the institution or the third party.

**Simulations.** Computer applications that offer highly interactive options for the learner to practice skills, model, or role-play in realistic scenarios.

**Social Sciences.** See General Education (Social Sciences).

**Student, Full-Time.** A student who is enrolled in a minimum of 12 credit hours per term or its equivalent.

**Student Learning Outcomes.** Concise measurable statements of direct and indirect learning outcomes with assessments that specify what students will know, be able to do, or demonstrate as a result of a specific, planned education experience. Student learning outcomes are expressed as measurable knowledge, skills, abilities or attitudes.

*Direct and Indirect Assessment of Learning Outcomes.* See Direct Assessment Competency-based Programs in the Glossary for examples.

**Student Satisfaction.** Student satisfaction and the level of satisfaction are defined by the campus based upon information collected, typically via a survey, on a regular basis from students who are currently enrolled at the campus. Satisfaction questions should cover different aspects of the current program of study and the services provided by the campus to prepare the student for the workforce.

**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.

**Synchronous Interactions.** Teaching/learning interactions between instructors and students which take place in real time or simultaneously through the use of various online technologies. These may include: virtual classrooms, audio- or videoconferencing, Internet teleconferences, etc.

**Term.** (1) A calendar unit. (2) Division of the school year during which an educational institution is in session; it may designate the summer term or may be used as a synonym for quarter, school term, semester, or trimester. Historically, a term has been any one of the two or three major periods during which classes were in session, specifically referred to as the fall term, spring term, etc.

**Terminal Degree.** The highest credential generally available in a discipline, which usually is an earned doctorate such as Ph.D., Ed.D., J.D., or D.B.A. In some disciplines, however, the master's degree is considered the terminal degree. Examples include the M.F.A., M.S.W., and M.L.S.

**Threaded Discussions.** Online classroom activity in which the instructor may post a series of messages on a particular topic and invite the students to participate in the discussion forum.

**Transcript.** A copy of the permanent academic (educational) record at an institution of higher education. It becomes an official transcript when the seal of the institution is affixed and the signature of an authorized person is appended.

**Two-Year Institution.** (1) Literally, an institution of higher education offering the first two years of college-level coursework. (2) In common usage a two-year institution is distinguished from a four-year institution and is characterized by offering at least two, but less than four, years of an organized curriculum. The curriculum may be of the transfer type (with credits normally transferable at full value toward a bachelor's degree), terminal-occupational, or open-ended. Two-year institutions include junior colleges, technical institutes, and semi-professional schools. In addition to organized curriculums, two-year institutions also may offer other types of instruction, e.g., courses in general education and adult education, short courses, and special lectures.

**Upper-Division Course.** Generally, a course that presents more specialized course content and is more rigorous than a lower-division course, and that often includes at least one prerequisite. Upper-division courses usually carry course numbers in the 300-499 or 3000-4999 range.

**Validated Test.** A nationally recognized, standardized or industry-developed test which consistently measures what it is designed to measure, e.g., ability of non-high school graduates to benefit from post-secondary education.

**Videoconferencing.** A teaching/learning activity which uses video and audio signals to communicate with student groups at diverse locations.

**Webinar.** A synchronous online conference in which the teacher or presenter may communicate with students via text, audio, video, electronic whiteboard and other devices. The event may include listener participation and archived for asynchronous delivery.

**Withdrawal.** The termination of a student's attendance in a class or in all classes before the end of the term.



**ACCREDITING COUNCIL FOR  
INDEPENDENT COLLEGES AND SCHOOLS  
(ACICS)**

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# BYLAWS

## ARTICLE I General Provisions and Definitions

*Section 1–Name.* The name of the corporation shall be the Accrediting Council for Independent Colleges and Schools, which corporation also is referred to herein as “ACICS” or “the Corporation”.

*Section 2–Board of Directors.* The governance and administration of the affairs of the Corporation shall be vested in a Board of Directors (sometimes referred to herein as the “Board”). The Board shall be constituted as provided in Article II.

*Section 3–Council.* The Council shall consist of elected and appointed commissioners.

*Section 4–Recognition.* ACICS shall be the body holding recognition from the U.S. Secretary of Education and any other appropriate recognition bodies.

*Section 5–Directors.* Directors are those persons serving on the Board of Directors.

*Section 6–Commissioners.* Commissioners are those persons elected by their peers or appointed by the Council to serve designated terms on the Council.

*Section 7–Public Representatives.* Representatives of the public are persons who are interested in career education; have knowledge or experience useful to the accreditation process; are willing to contribute opinion, advice, and expertise to the endeavors of ACICS and the Council; and are not (1) employed or formerly employed by an institution or program that either is accredited by the agency or has applied for accreditation or (2) associated as members of the governing board, owners, shareholders, consultants or in some other similar capacity with an institution or program that either is accredited by the agency or has applied for accreditation; or (3) a member of any related, associated, or affiliated trade association or membership organization; or (4) a spouse, parent, child or sibling of an individual identified in paragraph (1), (2) or (3) of this definition.

*Section 8–Membership.* Membership shall be institutional or organizational in nature and shall consist of accredited colleges, postsecondary schools, branchess, and other entities, all as defined in the Accreditation Criteria of ACICS.

*Section 9–Offices.* The main offices of ACICS shall be in the Washington, D.C., metropolitan area. ACICS may have other temporary or permanent offices to facilitate its work. The office of the Corporation’s registered agent shall be an office of ACICS.

*Section 10–President.* The President of the Accrediting Council for Independent Colleges and Schools shall be designated by the Board of Directors and shall be ACICS’s chief executive officer.

## ARTICLE II

### Board of Directors

*Section 1–Composition.* The Board of Directors shall be composed of the commissioners and the President. The President shall serve ex officio as a member of the Board and shall have no vote.

*Section 2–Powers and Duties.* Except as otherwise provided by law or in these Bylaws, the Board of Directors shall have the right and responsibility to manage and direct the affairs and exercise the powers of the Corporation. Responsibilities of the Board shall be to:

- (a) provide for an annual certified audit and management letter regarding all financial affairs of ACICS;
- (b) develop and approve an annual budget;
- (c) oversee revenues, expenditures, and investments;
- (d) monitor and coordinate external affairs, including government and consumer concerns;
- (e) assure canons of ethical business operations and personal conduct;
- (f) employ a chief executive officer whose title shall be President;
- (g) conduct an annual meeting of the membership of ACICS;
- (h) facilitate communication and coordination among the commissioners;
- (i) coordinate strategic planning, assess the effectiveness of the strategic plan, and take final action on the strategic plan;
- (j) assess the effectiveness of ACICS in fulfilling its mission and meeting its goals and objectives;
- (k) take all actions necessary to perform required functions of the Corporation; and
- (l) amend the Bylaws as provided for herein.

*Section 3–Officers of the Board and officers of the Council.* The officers of the Board of Directors shall be: Chair; Chair-elect; Secretary, by virtue of service as President; and Treasurer. The officers of the Council shall be: Chair and Chair-elect.

- (a) *Chair.* The Chair of the Council shall serve also as the Chair of the Board of Directors. The Chair shall preside over all meetings of the Board and of the Council and is responsible for seeing that policies established and actions taken by those bodies are carried out. The Chair will represent the Board and the Council in their dealings with governmental bodies, the press, and the public, and may sign or approve correspondence and other instruments.
- (b) *Chair-elect.* The Chair-elect of the Council shall serve also as Chair-elect of the Board. The Chair-elect assumes responsibilities as delegated by the Board; in the absence of the Chair, shall serve as Chair of the Board and of the Council; serves as Chair of the Nominating Committee; and shall serve as Chair of the Board and Council in the subsequent year.
- (c) *Secretary.* The President shall serve as the Secretary of the Board. The Secretary is responsible for preparing and maintaining custody of the minutes of all meetings of members, the Board, and the Council for the purpose of authenticating the records of the Corporation for each, for giving all notices required in accordance with these Bylaws, for receiving service in legal matters, and for performing all duties

customary to the office of Secretary. The Secretary shall have custody of the corporate seal and authority to affix the seal to any instrument requiring it.

- (d) *Treasurer.* The Treasurer shall be a Director and shall be elected by majority vote of the Directors present and voting at a duly constituted meeting of the Board. The Treasurer shall keep or cause to be kept complete and accurate accounts of receipts and disbursements and shall direct the President to ensure deposit of all moneys and other valuable property of the Corporation in such banks or depositories as the Board may designate. The funds, books, and vouchers under supervision of the Treasurer or other delegated persons, with the exception of confidential reports submitted by the members, shall at all times be subject to verification and inspection by the Board. The Treasurer shall serve on the Audit and Investment Committees of the Board of Directors. The Treasurer shall, at the annual meeting of members or by direct mail, report on the financial condition of the Corporation at least once annually.
- (e) *Additional Officers.* The Board may create positions of Assistant Treasurer and Assistant Secretary as necessary for the orderly conduct of business. When so authorized, the President shall appoint individuals from the professional staff to fill such offices and may assign appropriate duties to them. The President shall be responsible for filling all vacancies occurring in these positions.
- (f) *Terms.* Except as otherwise provided in these Bylaws, officers of the Board or the Council shall serve in office for one (1) year or until election of a successor or, if ex officio, as long as they hold the position which entitles them to serve as an officer of the Board or Council.

### **ARTICLE III** **Council**

*Section 1–Composition.* The Council shall consist of the elected and appointed commissioners generally representing member institutions, appointed commissioners-at-large, who are unaffiliated with a member institution and public representatives formerly employed at a public institution. It shall comprise fifteen (15) commissioners, at least five (5) of whom shall be elected by the membership and the balance of whom shall be appointed by the Council, and it shall include at least two academic representatives and at least two administrative representatives. 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. At least three of the appointed commissioners shall be public representatives. 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.

*Section 2–Powers and Duties.* Responsibilities of the Council shall be to:

- (a) promulgate standards of accreditation and establish eligibility conditions, policies, and procedures for accreditation;
- (b) take final action on initial grants of accreditation;
- (c) take final action on denial, suspension, and withdrawal motions;
- (d) provide mechanisms for appeals and dispute resolution to ensure due process in resolution of conflicts between members and the Council;
- (e) provide to members appropriate accreditation-related services such as consultation, accreditation process workshops, and training opportunities for evaluators;
- (f) disseminate information on standards, procedures, and activities;

- (g) monitor compliance with the standards;
- (h) receive and act on other applications;
- (i) issue show-cause directives and place institutions on probation;
- (j) serve as liaison to recognition agencies or bodies;
- (k) issue a list of accredited colleges, schools, and organizations;
- (l) assess and collect fees from members;
- (m) take final action on the strategic plan; and
- (n) exercise other powers and duties incidental to the foregoing.

*Section 3–Chair and Chair-elect.* The Chair of the Council shall be the Chair-elect from the previous year. The Council shall elect the Chair-elect of the Council, who will become Chair in the subsequent year, annually by majority vote of the commissioners present and voting at a duly constituted meeting of the Council.

## **ARTICLE IV**

### **Elections, Terms, Vacancies, Removal, Resignations, and Compensation**

*Section 1–Elections.* Elections shall be held annually, in years when elected positions must be filled, for the selection of persons each of whom shall serve as elected commissioners on the Council and the Board. No person shall serve as a member of the Council and not of the Board, nor shall any person other than the President serve as a member of the Board and not of the Council.

*Section 2–Eligibility for Election and Voting.* Any person employed by a member institution in good standing and meeting other eligibility criteria is eligible to run for Council and Board membership. Each main and branch campus is entitled to one Designated Delegate who is authorized to vote in all elections on behalf of that member institution as well as, in all other matters requiring a vote of the members. Appointment of the Designated Delegate is made by the chief executive officer of the institution by notice in writing to ACICS. Multiple campuses under common ownership may be represented by one designated delegate, who shall be empowered to cast votes on behalf of each campus. Changes of Designated Delegate shall be made in writing at least fifteen (15) days prior to the date of any scheduled election, which becomes the record date for determining eligibility to vote. Results of elections shall be certified by the Executive Committee.

*Section 3–Voting Procedures.* Specific election procedures concerning candidate qualifications, deadlines for registration, dates and methods of balloting and absentee balloting shall be developed by the Board and may vary from election to election. Electronic voting, properly secured, shall be allowed. The following general procedures shall apply to all voting:

- (a) there shall be at least two candidates nominated for each elective position by the Nominating Committee;
- (b) nominations by petition for each elective position will be permitted if such petition (i) is received at least 45 days prior to the date of the election, (ii) contains the names and signatures of Designated Delegates representing at least ten percent of the institutions that are members of ACICS, (iii) demonstrates that the petitioner satisfies the eligibility requirements contained in Section 2 of this Article, and (iv) meets any other procedural requirements which may be established by the Board;
- (c) every member, if properly registered and current with financial obligations, shall have the opportunity to vote;

- (d) proxy voting is not permitted in elections;
- (e) no more than one person from any institution or group of institutions commonly owned, may serve at any one time on the Council;
- (f) voting on behalf of multiple members under common ownership and control by one Designated Delegate may be permitted on membership-wide matters. The multiple members represented by one Designated Delegate must be recorded with the Secretary prior to the vote, and the multiple members represented by a single Designated Delegate shall count toward a quorum;
- (g) only the Designated Delegate of each member is eligible to vote;
- (h) voting shall be by secret ballot, which includes secure electronic balloting;
- (i) a majority vote, unless otherwise provided by these Bylaws, shall decide all non-candidate matters; and
- (j) a plurality vote shall decide all candidate elections.

*Section 4–Assumption of Office.* New commissioners shall assume office on January 1 of the calendar year following election or appointment, unless otherwise provided for by the Council. Incumbent commissioners will remain in office until new commissioners are seated.

*Section 5–Terms.* Term of service as a commissioner shall be five years. A person elected or appointed to fill a term of less than two and one-half years is entitled to apply for nomination and election or appointment to a full term. Upon completion of a commissioner’s term, the commissioner shall not be eligible to serve another full term through election or appointment until three (3) years have elapsed. However, a commissioner appointment to complete a vacated term, in full or part, is not subject to the three-year (3) waiting period. A commissioner who is elected to the Office of Chair-Elect in the final year of that commissioner’s term shall have that term extended for one year to allow service as the Chair of the Council to be fulfilled. If nominated, public representatives may serve one additional appointment without the three-year waiting period.

*Section 6–Vacancies.* Where a vacancy exists, the Nominating Committee shall review and make recommendations to the Council for its consideration.

*Section 7–Resignations.* Resignation from service as a commissioner and Director may be voluntarily tendered at any time. The resignation becomes effective upon receipt of written notice by the Chair of the Board and Council or the President. Automatic tendering of resignation is required under the following circumstances or conditions:

- (a) denial, suspension, or revocation of accreditation at the institution with which affiliated;
- (b) cessation or announced cessation of operations at such institution;
- (c) filing for reorganization or bankruptcy by such institution or its parent corporation;
- (d) debarment by the U.S. Department of Education from employment at any institution participating in federal student funding programs;
- (e) indictment for a criminal offense;
- (f) change of control or ownership at the institution with which affiliated;
- (g) failure of such institution to meet its financial obligations to ACICS which results in loss of membership;
- (h) change in employment status (other than internal); and
- (i) change in Designated Delegate status.



- (j) the commissioner is employed by an institution that is deemed to be under sustained and serious scrutiny regarding non-compliance with ACICS standards and requirements.

Not all of the foregoing necessarily will result in acceptance of resignation but must be considered by the Council before service can continue.

*Section 8–Removal.* A commissioner may also be removed by not less than a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Council for breach of any code, canons, or tenets of ethics formally adopted pursuant to these Bylaws.

*Section 9–Compensation.* Commissioners shall serve without compensation. Public representatives shall receive honoraria for service in such amounts as the Board shall fix. Commissioners, as well as members of committees, if so provided in advance, shall be reimbursed for expenses incurred in performance of authorized duties.

## ARTICLE V Committees

*Section 1–Standing Committees of the Council.* There shall be the following standing committees of the Council:

- (a) *Nominating Committee.* The Nominating Committee shall be responsible for the screening of nominees and the selection of candidates for election as commissioners. It also shall identify persons qualified to be appointed as commissioners and recommend them to the Council for appointment. The Nominating Committee shall seek to maintain a Council that is generally representative of the types of member institutions.
  - (1) *Composition.* The Nominating Committee shall be appointed by the Chair of the Council and shall consist of five (5) members, at least four (4) of whom are current commissioners. Members representing both nondegree and degree granting institutions are encouraged. There shall be two (2) representatives from the Executive Committee of the Board of Directors and one (1) person from an ACICS-accredited institution who may or may not be a member of the Council. The Chair-elect of the Council and Board automatically serves as the Chair of the Nominating Committee.
  - (2) *Procedures.* The membership of ACICS shall be notified of the composition of the committee and invited to submit to it names of qualified nominees. The committee in its selection of candidates shall be mindful of diversity of programs, size and types of institutions, and geographic representation. It shall develop and publish eligibility criteria, permissible campaign practices by candidates, and any special voting procedures. Interviews of nominees by the committee are permitted.
- (b) *Business Practices Committee.* The Business Practices Committee shall consist of commissioners appointed by the Chair of the Council and Board. The mission of the committee is to identify and promote quality business practices of career colleges and schools, to ensure integrity and ethical relations, and to foster cooperation among institutions on behalf of students and others served.
- (c) *Education Enhancement and Evaluation Committee.* The Education Enhancement and Evaluation Committee shall consist of commissioners appointed by the Chair of the Council and Board. The mission of the committee is to establish standards for educational quality that assist institutions in mission fulfillment, program planning and development, institutional evaluation activities, and successful educational outcomes.
- (d) *Financial Review Committee.* The Financial Review Committee shall consist of commissioners appointed by the Chair of the Council and Board. The mission of the committee is to monitor the financial stability

of accredited institutions in order to ensure they maintain sufficient financial resources to deliver a quality education to their students.

- (e) *Institutional Effectiveness Committee.* The Institutional Effectiveness Committee shall consist of commissioners appointed by the Chair of the Council and Board. The mission of the committee is to assist institutions in the improvement of their outcomes by establishing and assessing criteria for institutional effectiveness. In order to assist ACICS-accredited institutions to meet established standards, the committee shall review Campus Accountability Reports, Institutional Effectiveness Plans, and institutional outcomes and measurements.

*Section 2—Standing Committees of the Board of Directors.* There shall be the following standing committees of the Board:

- (a) *Executive Committee.* The Executive Committee shall consist of the Chair of the Board of Directors, who shall serve as Chair of the Executive Committee; the Chair-elect of the Board, who shall serve as Chair of the Executive Committee in the absence of the Chair of the Board; the Secretary; the Treasurer; and two additional Directors elected annually by majority vote of the Board. The Executive Committee acts on behalf of the Board and/or Council during the periods between Board and Council meetings. Accurate minutes of each Executive Committee meeting shall be maintained and shall be provided to the Board of Directors and/or Council at the next subsequent meeting of the Board of Directors or the Council. The Executive Committee's responsibilities shall be: between meetings of the Board and/or Council, act on issues requiring the timely attention of the Board or Council and assume such other duties as the Board of Directors or Council may from time to time delegate to the Executive Committee.
- (b) *Audit Committee.* The Audit Committee shall consist of a minimum of three members of the Board, including the Treasurer, as well as such other members as the Chair appoints. The committee shall work with the President to ensure an annual certified audit of the organization's financial activities is completed, that the findings of the audit are reviewed, and that actions are taken to address recommendations and areas of concern identified as part of the audit process.
- (c) *Investment Committee.* The Investment Committee shall consist of the President, a minimum of three other members of the Board, including the Treasurer, and such other members as the Chair appoints. The Investment Committee shall work with the President to provide oversight of ACICS's investment funds. The Investment Committee shall select investment advisors, develop an investment plan, and review investment reports at least annually.
- (d) *Governance Committee.* The Governance Committee shall consist of commissioners appointed by the Chair of the Council and Board. The mission of the committee is to ensure that ACICS operates within the construct of the Bylaws. The committee will evaluate and make recommendations for modifications to the Bylaws in response to proposed changes in standards or operational policies at ACICS.
- (e) The Board of Ethics shall consist of three individuals selected by the Board consisting of two independent, public members and one member affiliated with an ACICS institution. The Board will have the authority to review perceived or actual conflicts of interest by a commissioner or Director and decide if the individual is to be directed to resign.

*Section 3—Other Committees.* The Board of Directors may establish and appoint members to other ad hoc committees as deemed necessary.

## ARTICLE VI

### Membership, Fees, Meetings

*Section 1–Gaining Membership.* Membership in ACICS is voluntary and can only be obtained through accreditation. Members shall be institutions or organizations which provide education or training as heretofore defined. Each main or branch campus is entitled to all of the rights and privileges and assumes all of the obligations of membership as provided in these Bylaws. The term of membership shall be coexistent with accreditation.

*Section 2–Loss of Membership.* Any member that ceases to be accredited by ACICS shall automatically, and without the necessity for further action, be deemed to be removed from membership. Members may voluntarily resign, which also results in loss of accreditation. All obligations owed to ACICS, including payment of fees, shall be fulfilled prior to resignation. The loss of accreditation shall be retroactive to the date that all outstanding obligations had previously been fulfilled.

*Section 3–Types of Fees.* There shall be three types of fees: (a) annual sustaining fees, (b) user (or service) fees, and (c) late fees. The annual sustaining fee shall be scaled by formula to the annual educational revenue generated by each member. The user fees shall relate to the cost of services requested or the actions initiated by the members or applicants for membership. The late fees shall be established by the Council.

*Section 4–Change in Fees.* The Council may adjust the fees annually equivalent to the change in the national Consumer Price Index. Any increase above the CPI percentage shall be presented to the membership for approval.

*Section 5–Conditions of Payment.* Sustaining fees are due and payable on October 31. The Council may authorize a discount for sustaining fees received by September 30 each year. Nonpayment of annual fees by October 31 subjects a member to automatic loss of membership and loss of accreditation without a hearing. Any request for extension of time to pay or for a periodic payment plan must be received and approved prior to September 30. Payment plans will not extend beyond December 31. Institutions using periodic payment plans shall be assessed an interest rate of one and one-half percent (1.5%) per month on the unpaid balance. User fees must accompany the request for applicable service before the request will be processed.

*Section 6–Proration of Fees.* A member becoming eligible for membership during the first month of the fiscal year shall pay the full amount of the annual sustaining fees as applicable. Members becoming eligible during succeeding months shall pay a proportionate amount of the otherwise applicable fee as determined by the number of months remaining in the fiscal year, including the month in which membership is attained.

*Section 7–Other Costs.* In addition to fees herein described, costs of visits conducted by the Council will be invoiced to the institution.

*Section 8–Assessments.* The Council, upon a majority vote, may propose an assessment in addition to the annual sustaining fees provided for in this Article where there has occurred or is impending an emergency which may impair the ability of the Council to achieve its purposes and the amount of annual dues is insufficient to meet the Council's requirements. The proposed assessment shall be submitted to the members for approval or disapproval on majority vote.

*Section 9–Annual Meeting.* A meeting of the members shall be held annually at a date and place to be determined by the Board of Directors. The purpose of such meeting shall be the receipt of reports on the budget and finances of ACICS and its activities and affairs, and the transaction of other business as may be specified by the Board in the call for and notice of the meeting. The meeting may combine these business purposes with informational and educational sessions; meetings of the Board, the Council, commissions, or committees; and special events for the members.

*Section 10–Special Meetings.* Special meetings of the members may be called by the Board of Directors upon request of a majority of the Board or upon petition to the Board by not fewer than the lesser of fifty (50) members or ten percent (10%) of the membership not under common ownership or control.

*Section 11–Notice of Meetings.* Normally, members shall be notified at least thirty (30) days in advance of the date, location, time, and purpose of all meetings of the members. Waiver of notice may be recorded at any special meeting of the members by majority vote of a quorum present at such meeting.

*Section 12–Quorum.* Twenty percent (20%) of the members eligible to vote and represented by Designated Delegates shall constitute a quorum at a meeting of the members for the transaction of business, except that any issue not properly noticed in the call for the meeting and that requires membership-wide participation may not be acted upon under new business. The Board of Directors may adopt such procedures as it deems necessary for the conduct of business. In the absence of an established procedure, Robert’s Rules of Order shall apply.

*Section 13–Meetings of the Council.* The Council shall convene as often as necessary to review materials attendant to the accrediting process and to take formal action on the accredited status of applicants.

## **ARTICLE VII**

### **Appeals Process**

*Section 1–Review Board of Appeals.* A Review Board of 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 or 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. The Review Board shall include at least two (2) academic representatives, two (2) administrative representatives, and three (3) public members, as defined in Article III, Section 1 herein. Review Board panels will consist of a minimum of three (3) members and be comprised of at least one (1) public, one (1) academic, and one (1) administrative representative. 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 President shall convene timely a panel of the Review Board when necessary.

*Section 2–Due Process.* Criteria promulgated by the Council shall ensure that institutions are provided a fair and reasonable opportunity to present reasons why denial, suspension, withdrawal, or other final actions taken by the Council are inappropriate and should be remanded for further consideration. The due process provided is an appeal to the Review Board, pursuant to the procedures described in 2-3-604. All appeals to the Review Board of Appeals shall be on the record and shall provide for the submission of briefs and oral testimony by institutional representatives.

## **ARTICLE VIII**

### **Miscellaneous**

*Section 1–Liability.* No applicant, member, or former member shall be liable for the debts of ACICS in any amount except to the extent of the fees required of each member pursuant to Article VI, Sections 3 and 8, hereof.

*Section 2–Corporate Seal.* The corporate seal shall be in such form as may be approved by the Board of Directors.

*Section 3–Checks, Notes, Contracts.* The Board of Directors shall determine the persons who will be authorized on the Corporation's behalf to sign checks, drafts, or other orders for payment of money; to sign acceptances, notes, or other evidences of indebtedness; to enter into contracts; or to execute and deliver other documents and instruments. These persons (positions) will be designated in the Board approved Governance Policy Document. The Board of Directors shall, at its discretion, require officers, agents, employees, and other persons so authorized pursuant to this Section to give security for the faithful performance of their duties.

*Section 4–Books and Records.* The Corporation shall keep at its office correct and complete books and records of the accounts and transactions of the Corporation and a current list of the members, directors, and officers of the Corporation. Such books and records may be in written form or in any other form capable of ready conversion to written form.

*Section 5–Confidentiality.* The Council shall maintain the confidentiality of the accrediting process with members insofar as permitted by accrediting criteria, law, and regulation. The Council shall have written policies on disclosure of information to third parties.

*Section 6–Indemnification and Insurance.* The Corporation shall indemnify and hold harmless each director, officer, commissioner, member of an appeals board, member of a visiting team, agent, employee, or other person acting on behalf of the Corporation or the Council against and from all loss, cost, and expense reasonably incurred by such person in the payment, defense, or settlement of any claim, suit, or proceeding brought against such person because they acted as part of or on behalf of ACICS, the Council, or the Review Board, as a director, officer, commissioner, member of an appeals board, member of a visiting team, agent, or employee. The rights specified in this Section shall apply whether or not persons continue to act in such capacity at the time the loss, cost, or expense is incurred. Such rights shall not apply in relation to any matters as to which any such person shall be finally adjudged to be liable for willful misconduct. The Board of Directors also may authorize the purchase and maintenance of insurance on behalf of such persons and the Corporation against any liability that arises from their actions in such capacities.

*Section 7–Amendments.* The Bylaws of the Corporation may be amended by the Board of Directors by majority vote of all the directors.

*Section 8–Dissolution.* ACICS shall use its funds only to accomplish the objectives and purposes set forth in these Bylaws, and no part of said funds shall inure or be distributed to the members of ACICS. On dissolution of ACICS, any funds remaining shall be distributed to one or more regularly organized and qualified charitable, educational, scientific, or philanthropic organizations to be selected by the Board of Directors.

*Section 9–Fiscal Year.* The fiscal year of ACICS shall be July 1 through June 30.

## **ARTICLE IX**

### **Litigation, Jurisdiction and Venue, and Expenses**

*Section 1–Suits Against ACICS, Jurisdiction, and Exhaustion of Administrative Remedies.* Jurisdiction and venue of any suit, claim, or proceeding relating to membership, accreditation, or accredited status, whether a claim for damages or injunctive or declaratory relief, brought by an accredited member, former member, or applicant for membership and accredited status against ACICS, the Council, the Review Board, or a commissioner, officer, committee member, Review Board member, or staff member acting in his or her official capacity shall only be in the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia, Alexandria Division, or the Circuit Court for the City of Alexandria, Virginia. Accredited members, former members, and applicants must exhaust all administrative remedies provided for in the ACICS Criteria and Bylaws before initiating any suit, claim, or proceeding in Court.

*Section 2–Reimbursement of ACICS’s Litigation Expenses.* An applicant for membership, member, or former member of ACICS shall reimburse ACICS for all costs and expenses (including attorney’s fees) actually and reasonably incurred by ACICS in defending any suit, claim, or proceeding, whether for damages or for injunctive or declaratory relief, brought by an applicant, member, former member, or one or more present or former students of any of the foregoing against ACICS, the Council, the Review Board, any commissioners of the Council, or members of the Review Board, or officers, employees, or agents of ACICS, the Council, acting in their official capacity, where ACICS, the Council, the Review Board, the commissioner, officer, employee, or agent shall have been adjudged to be the prevailing party in the suit, claim, or proceeding.

*Section 3–Other Expenses.* Each member shall reimburse ACICS for all costs and expenses (including attorney’s fees) incurred by it in the production of any of the Corporation’s, or the Council’s, records relating to such member in response to lawful requests from parties in litigation or from state or federal agencies.

*Section 4–Binding Effect.*

- (a) Each existing member and new member of ACICS shall be provided with a copy of these Bylaws. Acceptance or continuation of membership in ACICS shall constitute each member’s agreement to be bound by the provisions of these Bylaws, as they may be amended from time to time, while a member of and subsequent to the termination of membership in ACICS.
- (b) Each applicant for membership in ACICS shall be provided with a copy of these Bylaws. Application for membership in ACICS shall constitute such applicant’s agreement to be bound by the provisions of these Bylaws, as they may be amended from time to time, regardless of whether such applicant becomes a member of ACICS.

# APPENDIX B Procedures and Guidelines for Unannounced Visits

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## UNANNOUNCED VISIT FACT SHEET

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. This Fact Sheet is designed to assist the institution and the visiting team in conducting this visit as smoothly and efficiently as possible.

## VISIT PROCEDURES

The purpose of this visit is to review records, interview students and staff, and, if applicable, review previously cited problem areas and verify responses to previous requests for information, such as complaints and admonishments. The team may consist of a staff member, an experienced evaluator, or both. Expect the team to spend the full day at your institution.

Upon arrival, the team will ask to speak with the chief on-site administrator. Following a brief interview, the team is to be given a short tour of the facility, including records storage areas, and then shown to a work room. This room could be an empty classroom or office, and it should be available exclusively for the team for the entire visit.

The institution must make the following information available to the visiting team:

1. Most recent Campus Accountability Report.
2. Current catalog and addenda (if applicable).
3. Current class schedule, including names of instructors and room numbers.
4. Most recent ACICS accreditation visit team report and institutional response.
5. Copy of each government program review and compliance audit conducted within the prior two years and any institutional responses.
6. Faculty/personnel records.
7. All student records, including admissions, academic, and financial.
8. Copies of institutional advertising.

Additional records may be requested by the team. Staff, faculty and students will be interviewed. Institutions are encouraged to have these records in a central location where more than one person can access them, should the chief on-site administrator not be present.

## REPORT AND SUBSEQUENT ACTIONS

A report will be prepared and sent to the institution for response. If the institution is found to be operating in accordance with the *Accreditation Criteria*, no further action will be taken.

If the institution is found to be violating provisions of the *Accreditation Criteria*, the Council may direct the institution to show cause why its accreditation should not be withdrawn, or it may direct that a full team visit the institution to evaluate its correction of these violations.

## **EXIT CONFERENCE**

At the conclusion of the visit, the team will meet with the chief administrator to discuss the visit and to answer any questions regarding the Council policies, procedures, and standards.

## **EXPENSES**

A fee will not be assessed for this visit, but each institution will be billed for expenses incurred during the visit. Failure to remit payment for expenses may result in a directive to show cause why the accreditation of the institution should not be withdrawn.

## **INSTITUTIONAL PARTICIPATION**

Any institution that refuses to undergo an on-site unannounced visit evaluation will be directed to show cause why its accreditation should not be withdrawn by suspension.



## APPENDIX C Institutional Publications Requirements

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This Appendix includes the Council's criteria for institutional publications, including catalogs, advertising literature, and other published documents describing the institution.

### CATALOG

The Council requires all accredited institutions and all applicant institutions to publish an acceptable catalog. An accredited institution with branch campuses may publish a common catalog, but it should be specific as to the faculty, programs, and student services available at each location (see "Multiple-Campus Catalogs" in this Appendix). All enrolled students must have access to the current catalog.

A catalog is written for many purposes and is directed toward a varied audience. The catalog becomes an announcement and a record and should be dignified in appearance. It must not be primarily a promotional publication, nor should it be directed toward a single segment of its varied audience. The catalog has been determined by the courts to be a legal document of the institution concerned.

The catalog should explain the offerings and services of an institution, but it should not glorify or extol. It should reflect the dignity and integrity of the institution it describes. The catalog must be available in hard copy, and may also be available in a read-only electronic format. The hard copy catalog must be appropriately printed and bound. The catalog may include illustrations and photographs that are pertinent to the institution.

At a minimum, the catalog must contain the following items:

1. A table of contents and/or an index.
2. An indication, on the front cover or on the title page, of the year or years for which the catalog is effective.
3. The names and titles of the administrators of the institution.
4. A statement of legal control which includes the names of trustees, directors, and officers of the corporation.
5. If the institution is now accredited, a statement denoting this fact (see "Statement of Accreditation" in these Guidelines).
6. A statement of the mission of the institution.
7. A listing of the full-time faculty members, showing:
  - (a) academic credentials held;
  - (b) institutions awarding the credentials; and
  - (c) the area of teaching specialization.
8. An academic calendar (calendar of events) showing beginning and ending dates of terms, quarters, or semesters; holidays; registration dates, etc.
9. The full disclosure of the institution's admission requirements, policies, and procedures, including the basis for admissions, test requirements, advanced standing requirements, and experiential learning assessment requirements.
10. A statement of the curriculums (programs) offered, including for each:
  - (a) a statement of the objective or purpose of the curriculum;

- (b) an accurate and complete listing of the courses included in each curriculum, each with a unique identifying number and title;
  - (c) the credit or clock hours awarded for each subject;
  - (d) the total credits or clock hours required for satisfactory completion of the curriculum;
  - (e) requirements for certification, licensing, or registration in the program career field, as appropriate; and
  - (f) any additional or special requirements for completion (such as practica or externships).
11. A description of each course (subject) offered, including:
- (a) identifying number;
  - (b) title;
  - (c) credit or clock hours awarded;
  - (d) a complete but concise description of the contents of the course; and
  - (e) prerequisites, if any.
12. An explanation of the grading or marking system (consistent with that appearing on the student transcript).
13. A definition of the unit of credit. If credit hour, identify whether quarter or semester. (See Section 3-1-516 for additional information.)
14. An explanation of standards of satisfactory progress. (See Section 3-1-420 for additional information).
15. A description of the certificates, diplomas, and/or degrees awarded, together with a statement of the requirements to be met in each instance.
16. A statement of the tuition, fees, and all other regular and special charges.
17. A complete and accurate listing of all scholarships offered (see Section 3-1-431 of the *Accreditation Criteria*).
18. A statement of the institution's refund policy and formula relative to method of financial obligation. This policy must be clearly outlined and must comply with Sections 3-1-433 and 3-1-434, of the *Accreditation Criteria*.
19. A statement pertaining to the nature and extent of student services offered (e.g., counseling and placement).
20. A grievance procedure that includes the name and address of ACICS, unless the grievance procedure is published in a student handbook.
21. If the institution offers degrees, the catalog must include the following information:
- (a) for occupational associate's degree programs, identification of courses that satisfy the general education requirement and an explanation of the course numbering system;
  - (b) for academic associate's degree programs, identification of courses that satisfy the general education and concentration requirements and an explanation of the course numbering system;
  - (c) for bachelor's degree programs, identification of upper-division courses and courses that satisfy the general education and concentration requirements and an explanation of the course numbering system; and

- (d) for post-baccalaureate or graduate degree programs (master's and doctorate degree programs), a separate section in the catalog describing the program requirements, admissions procedures, transfer policies, graduation requirements, regulations, and course descriptions. (See Sections 3-6-800 and 3-7-800).
22. If the institution offers courses via distance education, the catalog must include the following information:
- (a) a description of each mode of distance education delivery method used;
  - (b) the admission requirements for the courses or program(s) of study offered through distance education required only if different from the admission requirements for the residential programs;
  - (c) a description of tests used in determining access to distance education courses and programs, if applicable;
  - (d) a description of the resources and equipment the students must have to avail themselves of the instruction (including, computer requirements such as hardware and software, internet access, access to library/college for monitoring of examinations, etc.); and
  - (e) the special costs and fees associated specifically with distance education (e.g., platform access fees, on-line library access fees, purchase of books on-line).
23. If the institution is approved by the Council to offer direct assessment competency-based program(s), the catalog must include the following information:
- (a) a clear identification and listing of direct assessment competency-based program(s);
  - (b) a concise and clear description of how such programs are structured and administered; any special admissions requirements; how students will be expected to demonstrate achievement of competency goals; the types of academic and student services offered to assist students to pass the assessments; and how student achievements will be shown on the academic transcript;
  - (c) disclosure of the number of equivalent credit hours or clock hours and the general methodology the institution uses to determine the equivalencies;
  - (d) a clear description of how financial aid will be administered and disbursed for eligible students enrolled in such programs;
  - (e) disclosure of other entities or qualified individuals, in addition to the institution's faculty, engaged in the direct assessment process; and
  - (f) disclosure of the consequences or options available to students if they fail to demonstrate achievement of competency goals within a prescribed period of time.

### **ADDENDA/SUPPLEMENT TO THE CATALOG**

Listing of administrative staff and faculty, tuition and fees, and academic calendar may be included in a catalog addendum/supplement as standing items. In addition, the addendum/supplement may include other reasonable changes that occur after a catalog has been printed until the next printing. An institution is expected to update its catalog at an appropriate interval and the addendum/supplement should not be used as a substitute for meeting this expectation.

The addendum/supplement must clearly state that it is part of the catalog and must include the school name, location, and effective date for the entire document (or for individual sections if effective dates vary). The addendum must be included with each copy of the catalog.

## **MULTIPLE-CAMPUS CATALOGS**

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

## **ADVERTISING**

Any advertisement or promotional literature written or provided by an institution through any type of media shall be completely truthful and dignified. The material shall be presented in a manner which avoids leaving any false, misleading, or exaggerated impressions with respect to the institution, its personnel, its courses and services, or the occupational opportunities for its graduates. An English translation for advertising that is in a language other than English must also be available.

1. All advertising and promotional literature provided by an institution must clearly indicate that training or education, and not employment, is being offered.
2. All advertising and promotional literature must include the correct name of the institution. So-called “blind” advertisements are not permitted.
3. Institutions advertising to attract students in classified columns of newspapers or the equivalent on websites and the other electronic publications must use only classifications such as “Education,” “Schools,” or “Instruction.” Headings such as “Help Wanted,” “Employment,” or “Business Opportunities” may be used only to procure employees for the institution.
4. Testimonials used in advertising must reflect the opinions or experience of a current or prospective student or graduate of the institution. Testimonial messages must be factual and portray current conditions. They cannot contain any representations that would be deceptive or could not be substantiated by the institution. The institution must maintain a written release from the individual providing the testimonial on file.
5. An institution shall not use the words “free” and “guarantee” for advertising or marketing purposes in a manner that is misleading to prospective or current students. A disclosure must be made for services which are funded by third parties that are offered at no cost to students.
6. An institution shall not offer monetary incentives to the general public to visit, enroll in, attend, or complete a program. The institution cannot make guarantee or similar claims regarding job placement or salary for graduates.
7. References to financial aid availability must use the phrase “for those who qualify.” Financial aid cannot be the sole source of an advertisement.

## **PERFORMANCE INFORMATION DISCLOSURE**

In its disclosure of student achievement data (as required under Section 3-1-704), the following disclosure statement must be included:

*“These are the data reported to ACICS by the institution in its most recent Campus Accountability Report.”*

**STATEMENT OF ACCREDITATION**

When making public disclosure of accredited status in its catalog, the institution must include the name, address, and telephone number of ACICS.

For institutional catalogs, the fact of accreditation shall be stated only as follows:

*“Accredited by the Accrediting Council for Independent Colleges and Schools to award (name all applicable specific credential levels from among certificates, diplomas, associate’s degrees, bachelor’s degrees, and master’s degrees).”*

Institutions may add the following statement in announcing their accreditation:

*The Accrediting Council for Independent Colleges and Schools is listed as a nationally recognized accrediting agency by the United States Department of Education and is recognized by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation.*

For publications and advertising other than catalogs, institutions that wish to state the fact of accreditation shall use either the catalog language noted above or one of the following disclosure statements:

*“Accredited by the Accrediting Council for Independent Colleges and Schools”; or*

*“Accredited Member, ACICS”*

An institution is not permitted to use such statements as “fully accredited” or “accredited” without including the name of ACICS. An institution will not use or publicize the term “accredited” unless it is in fact accredited by ACICS or another recognized agency, or it has affirmative authority under state law. Any reference to stated authority for status as “registered,” “approved,” or “accredited” must include the name of the state extending the approval and must accurately identify the state agency. An applicant for ACICS accreditation may not disclose this fact in any manner.

For electronic media and web sites, the institution may provide a hypertext mark-up language link (“html”) to the ACICS web site when making public disclosure of its accredited status. Disclosure must be in compliance with Appendix C.

## APPENDIX D Standards of Satisfactory Progress

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An essential element in providing appropriate instruction and support services to students is monitoring their satisfactory academic progress (SAP). The Council requires all institutions to develop a policy of satisfactory academic progress that measures whether students are maintaining satisfactory academic progress in their educational program.

### **SATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS POLICY FOR INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTIONS**

Institutions located outside the United States, which serve students not participating in the U.S. Title IV student financial assistance programs, are required to publish in the catalog an SAP policy and systematically monitor academic progress of their students. At a minimum, the SAP policy must address the following elements: (a) minimum qualitative standards, such as a grade point average, which must be achieved by the end of each academic year or at 50% of the normal program length if the program is less than one academic year; (b) maximum time frame in which the educational objectives must be successfully completed; (c) a rationale if the maximum time frame for program completion exceeds 150% of the normal program length; (d) institutional procedures for a systematic monitoring of each student's progress in meeting the SAP policy; (e) a description of actions that must be taken by the institution if the student fails to make satisfactory academic progress; and (f) a minimum cumulative grade-point average of 2.0 or C or equivalent that must be achieved by each student upon graduation.

The Council has determined that the institutional policy must include the following requirements, which are consistent with the regulations specified by the U.S. Department of Education for student eligibility for receiving Federal Title IV financial assistance.

1. The institution has written standards and a schedule of satisfactory academic progress for all students, which are published in the catalog and in appropriate institutional literature, and are consistently applied to all students.
2. The institution strictly adheres to its published standards of satisfactory academic progress, monitors whether a student meets the minimum qualitative and quantitative components of the standards, and notifies students when satisfactory academic progress is not being made.
3. The standards of satisfactory academic progress provide for minimum qualitative standards, such as a grade point average or completion of work projects, which can be measured against a norm.
4. The policy defines a maximum time frame, not to exceed 150% of the normal program length, as defined by the institution, for all programs, in which the educational objective must be successfully completed (e.g., number of academic years, credit hours attempted, clock hours completed, months/weeks, terms or modules, etc. as appropriate), as opposed to simply setting a time limit on eligibility for Title IV financial aid.
5. The institution has provisions for an evaluation point at least by the end of each academic year (or at 50% of the normal program length if the program is one academic year or less) that determine whether the student has met the qualitative and quantitative components of the standards.
6. The institution has provisions for utilizing and publishing a schedule designating the minimum percentage or amount of work that a student must successfully complete at the end of each increment to complete the educational program within the maximum time frame.

7. The institution has provisions for determining at the end of each increment whether the student has met the qualitative and quantitative components of the standards. The qualitative and quantitative standards must be cumulative and must include all periods of the student's enrollment regardless of whether or not the student receives federal financial aid.
8. The institution's policies define the effect on satisfactory academic progress of course withdrawals, incomplete grades, repeated courses, and non-punitive grades. The institution's policies define the effect of non-credit or remedial courses on satisfactory academic progress.
9. The institution has provisions for an evaluation at the end of the second academic year and at the end of each subsequent academic year(s) where the student must have a minimum cumulative grade point average (CGPA) of 2.0 on a scale of 4.0, C, or its equivalent, or has academic standing consistent with the institution's requirements for graduation. A student receiving federal financial aid who does not meet the CGPA standards at the end of the second year will no longer be eligible for financial aid, may not be placed on probation, and must be dismissed, unless the student wishes to continue without being eligible for federal financial aid. However, a student not meeting the CGPA standards at the end of the second year may remain as an enrolled student who is eligible for federal financial aid if there are documented mitigating circumstances (i.e., death in the family, sickness of the student, etc.).
10. If the institution places students on warning, or on probation, as defined in sections 11 and 12 below, the institution's policy must describe these statuses.
11. An institution that evaluates academic progress at the end of each payment period may assign warning status to a student who fails to make satisfactory academic progress. A student may be assigned to warning status without an appeal or other action by the student. For institutions awarding U.S. Department of Education Federal Financial Aid, a student on warning may continue to receive assistance under federal financial aid programs for one payment period despite a determination that the student is not making satisfactory academic progress.
12. The institution must have an appeal process for students who do not meet the requirements of the institution's satisfactory academic progress policy. When an institution grants a student's appeal for mitigating circumstances, the student will be placed on probation for a specified period of time and considered to be making regular satisfactory progress. While a student is on probation, the institution may require the student to fulfill specific terms and conditions such as taking a reduced course load or enrolling in specific courses.

If a student is not making satisfactory academic progress, the institution may place the student in an extended enrollment status. However, all credits attempted count toward the 150% of the normal program length even if the student is on extended enrollment. Grades may be replaced if that is the institution's written policy. At the discretion of the institution, a student with an approved appeal who exceeds one and one-half times the standard time frame as defined by the institution either as a regular student or in an extended enrollment status may receive the original academic credential for which he or she enrolled, provided that there are no additional financial obligations to the student.

For institutions awarding U.S. Department of Education Federal Financial Aid Only: A student on probation will have their eligibility for financial aid reinstated. A student on probation may receive federal financial aid funds for one payment period. At the end of one payment period on probation, the student must meet the institution's satisfactory academic progress standards or meet the requirements of the academic plan developed by the institution and the student to qualify for further federal financial aid funds. A student placed in an extended enrollment status is not eligible for financial aid.

13. The institution must have clearly defined procedures for re establishing satisfactory academic progress.
14. The institution has rules for students who change programs, as well as for students who seek to earn additional credentials. For instance, an institution may have a policy that for a student who changes programs it will include in the determination of a student's satisfactory academic progress standing the credits attempted and grades earned that count toward the student's new program of study. Such a policy must be part of the institution's written policy.
15. The institution must have a policy that addresses the implications of transfer of credit on satisfactory academic progress.
16. The institution has provisions that the student must have a minimum CGPA of 2.0, C, for undergraduate programs and 3.0, B for graduate programs or their equivalent upon graduation. For approved professional graduate programs, which require attainment of specified competencies and a licensure or certification, the institution has published and consistently follows an appropriate SAP policy.
17. If the institution is approved to offer direct assessment competency-based program(s), the institution must demonstrate that it has implemented appropriate policies that describe how it will measure whether a student enrolled in a competency-based program is making satisfactory academic progress. Policies and procedures must be implemented to identify in a timely manner when a student enrolled in such a program has withdrawn or changed enrollment status. The institution must maintain for Council review evidence that financial aid officers and others assigned to monitor satisfactory academic progress have been trained and are adequately monitored for implementing policies affecting competency-based programs.



In evaluating institutionally funded student aid, ACICS will consider the characteristics listed below. These characteristics are not listed in any priority order. Any institution whose aid program is not in accordance with any or all of these characteristics may be subject to a compliance warning. The greater the number of these characteristics evident in an institution's grant program, the greater the presumption of acceptability. ACICS will, however, review each institutional grant program in its entirety.

1. Grants are made from segregated funds or from identifiable funds which have been provided for in the institution's operating budget.
2. The percentage of students receiving institutionally funded grants, as compared to the overall student population of the institution, is not inordinately high.
3. The total amount for institutionally funded grants is publicly and clearly identified prior to the beginning of the academic year or term.
4. Institutionally funded grants may be awarded on the basis of student need or standards describing similarly circumstanced students.
5. The amount of institutionally funded grants is not based solely on the difference between the tuition charged and the amount of federal or state financial aid received.
6. The tuition charged reasonably and closely represents the cost to the institution of the instruction provided and does not significantly vary in amount from similar or same instruction in another certificate or degree program.
7. The amount of tuition retained as nonrefundable by the institution from those students who drop out prior to the end of the academic term or period is proportionally allocated between the institutionally funded grants and the federal and state financial aid received by the student.
8. The type and amount of institutionally funded needs-based grants is determined by an independent selection or review panel.

# APPENDIX F

## Requirements for English as a Second Language Programs

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This appendix consolidates information regarding the Council's requirements for institutions offering stand-alone ESL programs and/or ESL coursework as part of a Title IV-eligible program, and federal requirements for the awarding of financial aid.

The following information is intended to combine the highlights of the ACICS requirements and federal regulations noted above and should assist institutions in understanding Council criteria for offering stand-alone ESL programs and the major differences between Council requirements and federal regulations for these ESL programs. Additionally, an overview of federal guidelines for ESL coursework offered within an eligible program is included.

### SEPARATELY ELIGIBLE, STAND-ALONE ESL PROGRAMS

#### Council Requirements

The requirements for reporting information on separately-eligible ESL programs are the same as for all other programs. The institution must immediately notify ACICS when these programs are initiated, changed, or discontinued. An on-site evaluation with an appropriate subject specialist will be required when a new ESL program is initiated, and may be required when the program is changed.

The objective of stand-alone ESL programs is to enhance the English-language proficiency of individuals who have pre-existing vocational knowledge, training, or skills, but cannot use that knowledge, training, or skill because of their English-speaking deficiency. No vocational training is provided in a stand-alone ESL program.

In order to receive approval from ACICS to provide stand-alone ESL programs, the institution shall:

1. Adhere to the stated mission of the program when developing the curricula;
2. Administer, at entrance and exit, a nationally recognized exam of English comprehension (e.g., Test of English as a Foreign Language, Test of Spoken English.)
3. Provide documentation that all admitted students are enrolled in accordance with Section 3-1-303.
4. Verify or assess at entrance, with supporting documentation, that the enrolling student already has knowledge, training, or skills in a vocational field, unless the student is enrolled solely to obtain ESL competency unrelated to a vocation (also a Department of Education regulation.)
5. Describe the placement services, if any, to be offered to graduates of the ESL program. Institutions are not required to include these graduates in their placement statistics.
6. Employ degreed faculty who have prior experience in this field of instruction.
7. Involve faculty in professional organizations and workshops enabling them to meet the special needs of the ESL student.

#### Department of Education Regulations

The institution must provide information or documentation that the program:

1. Consists solely of ESL instruction.
2. Admits only undergraduate students who it determines need ESL to use already existing knowledge, training, or skills.

3. Meets the other program and institutional eligibility requirements including:
  - (a) that it leads to a degree or certificate,
  - (b) that it is at least a one-year program at a public or private nonprofit institution of higher education, or a six-month program at a postsecondary vocational institution or a proprietary institution of higher education,
  - (c) that it admits as regular students only persons who have a high school diploma or the recognized equivalent (GED) or who are beyond the age of compulsory school attendance in the state in which the institution is located and have the ability to benefit from the training offered,
  - (d) that it is legally organized by its state to offer the ESL certificate or degree program,
  - (e) that it is approved by the school's nationally recognized accrediting agency or association, or that it meets one of the statutory alternatives to accreditation, and
  - (f) if it is a credit-hour program, that it meets any applicable state and accrediting agency requirements governing the use of credit hours.

NOTE: ESL is an eligible program only for purposes of the Pell Grant Program.

## ESL COURSES AS PART OF AN ELIGIBLE PROGRAM

### Council Requirements

Conversion from clock to credit hour for the ESL courses must be appropriate and in compliance with Department of Education regulations for remedial coursework.

### Department of Education Regulations

ESL coursework required by a student when accepted into an existing, Title IV-eligible program must be considered remedial in nature for the purpose of calculating student financial aid. Note that remedial coursework is by regulation either noncredit or reduced credit, for purposes of the postsecondary program, although these noncredit or reduced academic credit hours are converted to the credit value of non-remedial courses for the purpose of calculating Title IV payments to students.

It is important to remember that a program of study must be Title IV-eligible excluding the remedial courses (i.e., for a 300 clock-hour Hospitality and Tourism program to be eligible for student loan programs, any remedial courses offered must be added to the 300 clock hours).

### Summary

ACICS members currently offering or planning to offer stand-alone ESL programs or ESL as remedial courses taken with an eligible program must be aware of and in compliance with all Council requirements and Department of Education regulations. In comparing the two, it is apparent that if an institution is not in compliance with the Department of Education, it will not be in compliance with ACICS because all of the Department's requirements are inherent to the *Accreditation Criteria*; ACICS is, however, more restrictive in several areas.

Be advised that compliance with Appendix F does not ensure that a program will be determined by the U.S. Department of Education to be eligible for Title IV participation. Should the institution desire Title IV funding for an ESL program, it should discuss program eligibility with the appropriate Department of Education regional office before applying for Council approval.

## APPENDIX G Guidelines on Disclosure and Notification

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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 renewals 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 a 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.

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.

# APPENDIX H Principles and Requirements for Nontraditional Education

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## SECTION I

### DIRECT ASSESSMENT COMPETENCY-BASED PROGRAMS

Programs that are designed to prepare students for a specific profession or career are especially suited to be offered as direct assessment competency-based programs because such programs focus on what the students need to know, understand, or be able to do. The process utilized for the development of the curriculum, expected competencies, ways to directly assess such competencies and equate them to credit hours or clock hours (as required by the United States Department of Education as well as by the Council) demands active involvement of employers, as appropriate, and other experts in the discipline. Potential benefits gained by such programs are as follows:

- Allow students to progress at their own pace, but in compliance with the institution's satisfactory academic progress policy;
- Allow flexibility to motivated students;
- May potentially shorten the time for completion of the program;
- May potentially reduce overall cost of education; and
- May foster creativity for the institution, faculty and students in exploring cost-effective pathways to complete a program.

#### Federal Definition of Direct Assessment Competency-based Programs

A direct assessment program is an instructional program that, in lieu of credit hours or clock hours as a measure of student learning, utilizes direct assessment of student learning, or recognizes the direct assessment of student learning by others. The assessment must be consistent with the accreditation of the institution or program utilizing the results of the assessment.

Direct assessment of student learning means a measure by the institution of what a student knows and can do in terms of the body of knowledge making up the educational program. These measures provide evidence that a student has command of a specific subject, content area, or skill or that the student demonstrates a specific quality such as creativity, analysis or synthesis associated with the subject matter of the program. Examples of direct measures include projects, papers, examinations, presentations, performances, and portfolios.

#### ACICS Glossary of Definitions

Using the Federal definition as a guide, the Council has developed expanded definitions for Competency-based Programs and Direct Assessment Competency-based Programs. A longer list of examples of "direct" assessment measures is given in the Glossary. "Indirect" assessment measures, while deemed valuable for assessing institutional and program effectiveness, are not included in the consideration for the approval of competency-based programs.

For consideration of eligibility to participate in Title IV Federal Student Aid Programs, the Department of Education will consider only direct assessment competency-based programs.

### **Process for Review, Approval and Quality Monitoring Visits**

Proposed initiation of a direct assessment competency-based program is classified as a substantive change and requires Council review and approval.

Institutions must submit Part I of the Application for Direct Assessment Competency-based Program, along with required supporting documents, for a preliminary review and Council action. A separate application is required for each program. The guidance document and instructions accompanying Part I of the application are designed to guide the institutions in gaining an idea of the types of direct assessment methods that are strongly recommended for professional and career-focused programs. The principles and requirements included in this Appendix will be applied in reviewing the application.

In considering the application, the Council will determine if the institution has demonstrated that it has used a rigorous process to identify what the student or graduate must know and be able to do to be considered “competent” by employers and experts in the field or discipline. In addition, the institution has demonstrated that it has developed robust direct assessment techniques and has explicitly described how it determines the equivalent number of credit or clock hours for the program.

Upon approval of Part I of the application by the Council, the institution will apply to the U. S. Department of Education for Title IV approval of the proposed direct assessment competency-based program.

Part II of the Application for Direct Assessment Competency-based Programs must be submitted to ACICS at least three months prior to the effective start date of the program. The approval letter will provide instructions on at least two quality monitoring on-site visits to the institution—the first visit will be conducted within six months of start of the program and a second follow-up visit will be conducted between 12 to 18 months of start of the program, depending upon the credential level of the program.

### **Institutional Mission and Institutional Readiness**

- (a) The basis for the introduction of direct assessment competency-based programs must support the mission and objectives of the institution.
- (b) The structure and objectives of the program must clearly demonstrate that a systematic process was utilized in identifying and defining specific competencies related to the program. The process shall include participation of representation from employers, experts in the field, faculty, alumni and faculty.
- (c) The Campus Effectiveness Report must include a discussion of the proposed direct assessment competency-based programs—the rationale, overall structure, anticipated direct assessment methods engaged, plans for assessment and continuous improvement of the program, and adoption of best practices in competency-based education.

### **Admissions Requirements and Enrollment**

Eligibility requirements for admission to direct assessment competency-based programs must be clearly defined, published and consistently applied. The institution is expected to develop objective mechanisms and standards for determining the potential characteristics of students who are best suited to pursue and complete the program.

### **Curriculum Development and Direct Assessment Measures**

- (a) In the development of the curriculum, institutions must organize each course to enable students to clearly understand measurable learning objectives. Whenever possible, the Council encourages institutions to utilize standardized tests and industry-recognized licensure or certification examinations as direct assessment of student learning. Multiple direct assessment methods, which are student-centered, must be utilized where appropriate.
- (b) The syllabus for each course must be expanded to include clear learning objectives, student competency expectations, direct assessment techniques utilized by the faculty, criterion-based rating scales or rubric scores where appropriate, and the institution's systematic methods for determining credit hour or clock hour equivalencies. The syllabus must also clearly state how the student's progress will be monitored and how the final grades will be recorded.

### **Faculty and Instructional Support**

Maximum support of the program faculty is essential to develop and implement this student-centered program. The institution must demonstrate that the faculty members are provided proper training, in-service and professional development activities to support this program. A rationale for faculty-student ratios must be developed. Adequate technology support must be provided as appropriate for faculty to monitor student progress and competency achievements.

### **Student Support Services**

- (a) The institution must demonstrate that it offers strong student support services to assist students in achieving their competency goals. Mentors and student counselors must be trained to provide suitable support.
- (b) The institution must have a definite pathway for competency-based program students who may be advised to transition to a traditional fixed-schedule, teacher-directed format.
- (c) Academic advisors, registrars, career counselors, and financial aid counselors must be provided special training to provide support to the direct assessment competency-based program students.

### **Utilization of External Entities and Experts**

- (a) If appropriate, the institution may utilize external entities and experts in providing a portion of the direct assessment competency-based program. The scope and nature of their involvement must be clearly outlined in a formal contract. The institution must demonstrate that it has sufficient academic control for the development and monitoring of the program. The contract must be approved by the Council prior to implementation.
- (b) If external entities and experts are utilized, the institution's faculty must provide more than 50 percent of the direct assessments of the competency-based program.

### **Continuous Program Assessment and Improvement**

The institution must have adequate plans for the continuous assessment of the effectiveness of the program and provide for continuous improvement. These plans must be described in the Campus Effectiveness Plan.

### **Publications**



Full and accurate disclosure of an approved direct assessment competency-based program must be provided in the institution's catalog and Web site. The catalog disclosure must follow the requirements as described and outlined in Appendix C, Item 23.

## SECTION II

### DISTANCE EDUCATION

In addition to the general standards in Title III, Chapter 1, which apply to all institutions, and applicable standards in Chapters 2 through 6, the following standards apply specifically to distance education delivery methods. These principles and guidelines are designed to inform institutions of the policies of the Council and to guide institutional representatives when designing, implementing, and evaluating distance education forms of educational delivery.

#### Institutional Readiness

- (a) Institutions must notify and receive approval from ACICS prior to using distance education as a mode of delivery. (See Section 2-2-106)
- (b) Institutions must have a plan to implement distance education instruction. At a minimum, the plan should include the rationale, resources, course/program objectives, content, and student assessment. Institutions must integrate this plan into the Campus Effectiveness Plan.
- (b) The instructional delivery method must be appropriate for students and the curriculum.
- (c) Institutional policies and procedures should be consistently applied using procedures that are appropriate to the mode of delivery.
- (d) Institutions must designate a qualified individual to oversee the distance education activities.

#### Admissions Requirements and Enrollment

- (a) Institutions must identify the admission requirements of distance education courses/program/s and how it differs from, if applicable, the on-ground admission requirements.
- (b) If an on-line admissions test is required, it must be administered in a manner which verifies the student's identity. Institutions must make it clear in writing at the time of enrollment how the student's identity will be verified throughout the course and program, how the student's privacy will be protected, and if the student will be assessed any additional charges associated with the verification of student identity.
- (c) Institutions must clearly and appropriately state any requirements the students must possess or have access to in order to access this mode of delivery.
- (d) Institutions must provide an on-line orientation program to familiarize the student with the equipment, resources used in the distance education activities, and orient the student to the distance education learning process.

#### Curriculum and Instructional Delivery

- (a) Regardless of instructional delivery method, the syllabi must identify the course learning objectives. Each course learning objective must support one or more program learning outcomes. (See Glossary definition of Syllabus.)

- (b) The course must provide sufficient and appropriate opportunities for interaction between faculty and students and among students.
- (c) Institutions must demonstrate to the Council that the clock or credit hours required and awarded are appropriate for the degrees and credentials offered using a thoroughly developed rationale. Credit award rationales for distance education delivery of courses or programs generally do not use the traditional lecture/laboratory/externship formulas for credit calculations (See Section 3-1-516, Course and Program Measurement).
- (d) Curriculum must be administered in a way that maintains security of access.
- (e) Institutions must demonstrate that the student who registers for a distance education course or program is the same student who participates in and completes the course or program and receives the academic credit. The verification method, at the option of the institution, may include a secure login and pass code, proctored examinations, and other appropriate student authentication or verification technology.

#### **Faculty and Instructional Support**

- (a) The institution must employ academically and/or experientially credentialed faculty to teach online courses appropriate to the subject matter.
- (b) Faculty hired to facilitate online instruction must be properly trained to utilize the institution's learning management system for purposes of instruction, communication, and assessment.
- (c) The instruction must provide an accessible and reliable learning management system and technical support to effectively facilitate online instruction and learning.
- (d) The institution must demonstrate that the student/teacher ratio appropriately supports faculty and student interaction, facilitation of interaction among students and interaction with curriculum content.
- (e) The institution must have a faculty development plan on file that is appropriate for each individual. For further information, see Section 3-1-543.

#### **Resources and Equipment**

- (a) The institution must demonstrate that it has adequate financial resources to support the form of delivery.
- (b) The institution must demonstrate that students taking online courses have access to the same or equivalent library resources and support as students taking courses in a physical classroom.

#### **Students and Student Services**

- (a) The institution must orient online students to its learning management system, resources and support services, including technical support.
- (b) Student support services available to students enrolled in online programs must be the same or equivalent to those provided to students enrolled in ground-based programs, including but not limited to student services such as counseling, academic advising, financial aid, and employment assistance.

#### **Student Evaluation and Program Assessment**

- (a) The course learning objectives for a course delivered online must be the same as the learning objective for the same course delivered on ground.

- (b) Regardless of instructional delivery method, assessments and assignments should demonstrate student achievement of course learning objectives.
- (c) The institution must document that it conducts course/program evaluations, including assessment of student learning outcomes, student retention and placement, and student, graduate, faculty, and employer satisfaction (See Section 3-1-111.)

#### **Publications**

- (a) The institution must fully disclose what form(s) of instruction it uses in its catalog and web site and, when appropriate, in its advertising and promotional material. The catalog disclosure must follow the requirements as described and outlined in Section 3-1-701 and Appendix C, number 22).

### **SECTION III**

#### **SELF-PACED INSTRUCTION**

In addition to the general standards in Title III, Chapter 1, which apply to all institutions, and applicable standards in Chapters 2 through 6, the following standards apply specifically to self-paced instruction delivery methods. These principles and guidelines are designed to inform institutions of the policies of the Council and to guide institutional representatives when designing, implementing, and evaluating self-paced instruction forms of educational delivery.

#### **Institutional Readiness**

- (a) Institutions must notify and receive approval from ACICS prior to using self-paced as a mode of delivery. (See Section 2-2-106)
- (b) Institutions must demonstrate a shift from a teacher-centered to a learner-centered environment.
- (c) Institutions must employ faculty who possess the technical skills to teach in a self-paced environment.
- (d) The delivery method must be appropriate for students and the curriculum.

#### **Admissions Requirements and Enrollment**

Institutions must identify the admissions requirements of self-paced courses/programs.

#### **Curriculum Content and Instruction and Delivery**

- (a) Regardless of instructional delivery method, the syllabi must identify the course learning objectives. Each course learning objective must support one or more program learning outcomes. (See Glossary definition of Syllabus.)
- (b) Institutions must demonstrate to the Council that the clock or credit hours required and awarded are appropriate for the degrees and credentials offered using a thoroughly developed rationale. Credit award rationales for distance education delivery of courses or programs generally do not use the traditional lecture/laboratory/externship formulas for credit calculations (See Section 3-1-516, Course and Program Measurement).
- (c) Institutions must demonstrate compliance with applicable federal and state regulations.

#### **Faculty and Instructional Support**

- (a) The institution must employ academically and/or experientially credentialed faculty to oversee the self-paced course/program.

- (b) The faculty must be adequately trained to instruct in a self-paced environment.
- (c) The faculty must be supported with the appropriate education resources and technology to facilitate self-paced instruction.
- (d) The institution must demonstrate that the student/teacher ratio appropriately supports faculty and student interaction, facilitation of interaction among students and facilitation of student interaction with curriculum content.

### **Resources and Equipment**

The institution must provide an accessible and reliable learning management system and technical support to effectively facilitate online instruction and learning.

### **Students and Student Services**

- (a) The institution must orient online students to its learning management system, resources and support services, including technical support.
- (b) Student support services available to students enrolled in self-paced programs must be the same or equivalent to those provided to students enrolled in ground-based programs , including but not limited to student services such as counseling, academic advising, financial aid, and employment assistance.

### **Student Evaluation and Program Assessment**

- (a) The course learning objectives for a self-paced course must be the same as the learning objectives for the same course delivered on ground.
- (b) Regardless of instructional delivery method, assessments and assignments should demonstrate student achievement of course learning objectives.

### **Publications**

The institution must fully disclose what form(s) of instruction it uses in its catalog and web site and, when appropriate, in its advertising and promotional material. The catalog disclosure must follow the requirements as described and outlined in Section 3-1-701 and Appendix C, number 22.

# APPENDIX I Principles and Guidelines for International Partnership Agreements

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In addition to the general standards in Section 2-2-507; Title III, Chapter 1, which apply to all institutions, and applicable standards in Chapters 2 through 7, the following standards apply specifically to institutions proposing to initiate an international partnership agreement with an entity outside the United States or its territories.

The programs and/or courses offered abroad must be consistent with the institution's educational mission and goals and must meet the same academic standards, educational effectiveness and student achievement.

These principles and guidelines are designed to inform institutions of the policies of the Council and to guide institutional representatives when designing, implementing, and evaluating an International Partnership Agreement (IPA).

The partnership agreement should include the following items and detail each entity's responsibility in the following areas:

## ELEMENTS IN AN INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT

- I. Duration and Jurisdiction
  1. Institutions must identify the start and end date of the agreement.
  2. The agreement must list the signatories/partners involved in the international partnership.
  3. The agreement must describe under which jurisdiction(s) the agreement will legally be bound, i.e. legal jurisdiction of ACICS institution.
- II. Administration of the International Partnership Activity
  1. Institutions must identify the individual with the overall responsibility for the activity.
  2. Institutions must identify the on-site administrator for the activity.

## CURRICULUM CONTENT, INSTRUCTION, AND DELIVERY

Institutions shall ensure the quality and rigor of courses/program offered through the international partnership agreement.

- III. Faculty and Instructional Support
  1. Institutions must employ academically and experientially credentialed faculty to oversee the instruction, evaluation, and grading requirements of the courses/ program.
  2. Institutions must have faculty credentials evaluated by a recognized service for evaluation of foreign credentials.
  3. The faculty must be supported with the appropriate education resources and technology.
- IV. Admissions Procedures and Requirements

The institution must identify the admission requirements for enrolling in courses/programs abroad.

## VI. Students and Student Services

## 1. Advising and Counseling

- (a) Institutions must provide academic advising and counseling services to students.
- (b) Institutions must have procedures for adding and dropping courses.

## 2. Financial Aid

If applicable, institutions shall detail the institution's procedure for awarding, disbursing, and counseling students on financial aid funds that will be used for overseas study.

## 3. Transfer of Credit

Institutions must in compliance with Section 3-1-413 as it relates to transfer of credit.

## 4. Student Orientation

The institution must provide pre-departure orientation and on-site orientation programs for students, if applicable.

## 5. Grievance Procedure

A grievance policy and procedure must be included in the catalog and list name and address of ACICS, unless published in a student handbook.

## 6. Student Records

The institution must provide a plan for storing student records and providing access to on-site administrator at the international location.

## 7. Student Accommodations

Institutions should detail the plan for arranging student accommodations during the study abroad period, if applicable.

## VII. Security

- 1. Institutions must describe how student, staff and faculty safety at the international education facility will be ensured.
- 2. Institutions must describe the plan to ensure security of students, staff and faculty in case of civil unrest or natural disaster in host country.

## VIII. Financial Requirements

Institutions must be in compliance with Section 3-1-430 as it relates to financial aid, tuition and charges.

## IX. Resources and Equipment

Instructional resources and equipment must be readily available, accessible, and reliable.

## X. Student Evaluation and Program Assessment

The institution must implement an assessment plan that measures attainment of core competencies for courses/program and measurable objectives for each course.

## XI. Publications

The institution must fully disclose what form(s) of instruction it uses in its catalog and Web site, and when appropriate, in its advertising and promotional material. The catalog disclosure must follow the requirements as described and outlined in Section 3-1-701 and Appendix C, number 22.

XII. Termination of Agreement and Teach-out Plan

Institutions must detail the plan for completion of program or courses should international partner fail to provide services.

XIII. International Site Facilities

Institutions must include a description of facilities at the international site and provide evidence that the facilities are in compliance with host country building code regulations.

Summary

ACICS members planning to enter into an international partnership agreement must be aware of and in compliance with all Council requirements and Department of Education regulations.

International demands for post-secondary education provide opportunities for member institutions to expand the geographic footprint of their education delivery infrastructure, through on-line, on-ground and combinations of those and other modalities. Regardless of the education delivery infrastructure utilized at an international location, the institution is expected to operate in compliance with ACICS standards as demonstrated through direct monitoring of administrative operations, instruction, student services and the comparable full array of processes that apply to all institutions accredited by ACICS.

The standards and guidelines below will be applied to institutions that offer education or study abroad activities at international locations under the ACICS grant of accreditation. They are designed to apply Council expectations for effectiveness and integrity to programs that primarily lead to employment in professional, technical and occupational fields, regardless of the geographic location of the education or study abroad activity, or the modality with which the education is delivered. Council acknowledges education or study abroad may serve to enhance the interpersonal and developmental aspects of the student, including an improved ability to relate to and work with people from different cultures and ethnic, linguistic and national backgrounds. Council also acknowledges that education or study abroad, as part of a comprehensive career education program, may be directly applicable to the workplace and contribute to a graduate's success in finding placement in an organization with a multinational employee profile that utilizes multinational vendors and suppliers. Finally, the Council authorizes the utilization of education or study abroad, under the parameters prescribed in this section, in recognition that structured education or study abroad may enhance the graduate's ability to compete for job placement with international employers.

A key principle of ACICS standards regarding education or study abroad is that the accredited institution must demonstrate that the quality of the education derived from locations outside of a student's home country is comparable to that received at its domestic accredited locations. The burden of proof lies with the institution, regardless of the form of education or study abroad.

1. ***Education or Study Abroad Activities:*** For all education or study abroad activities, other than those performed through a formal partnership agreement with an international institution, a U.S.-based institution is required to host a comprehensive Forum review and provide the final determination letter demonstrating substantial conformity with the Forum's standards, contained in the document, "Standards for Good Practice of Education Abroad (SGPEA)", published by the Forum on Education Abroad (<http://www.forumea.org/standards-standards.cfm>); the requirements for maximum length of study as defined in #2 (below); and the academic residency requirement as described in #3 (below). For those education or study abroad activities performed through a formal partnership agreement, the IPA requirements apply. (Section 2-2-510; Appendix I) International institutions accredited by ACICS located outside the U.S. that are planning to initiate education or study abroad activities must disclose the nature and scope of such activities in writing to ACICS and seek prior approval.
2. ***Maximum of Length of Education or Study Abroad Activity:*** No more than 50 percent of a program's coursework may be completed through education or study abroad activities, including transfer credit, challenge examinations and other sources. An education or study abroad program may not exceed an equivalent of two semesters in length.
3. ***Academic Residency:*** Students admitted to an education or study abroad program are those who must have satisfactorily completed a minimum of one full-time equivalent semester or quarter or trimester, on-line or on-site through the home institution. Additionally, education or study abroad students are required to complete a minimum one full-time equivalent semester or quarter or trimester on-line or on-site through the home institution following completion of the education or study abroad activity and prior to completion of the credential.



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# Criteria Revisions

The following criteria have been accepted as final with the modified date noted (new language is underlined, deleted language is struck):

Section	Criteria Revision	Date Modified
<b>3-6-601. Enrollment Prerequisites.</b>	<p>The threshold admission requirement to a master's degree program is a baccalaureate degree.</p> <p>If admission to a professional program is granted without a baccalaureate degree, the burden is on the institution to demonstrate and justify that the alternate admission requirement is accepted by a recognized licensing or specialized accrediting agency and is common practice among accredited institutions of higher education. <u>In such cases, admission may be granted only to eligible students who have completed, at a minimum, an associate's degree or equivalent. If the institution chooses to award a suitable baccalaureate degree upon completion of specified requirements or concurrently with the award of the professional master's degree, the baccalaureate degree curriculum must be approved by the Council.</u></p> <p><del>In instances where a baccalaureate degree is not used as the threshold for admission, the following conditions must be met: (a) admission to the program may be granted only to eligible students who have completed at a minimum an associate degree or equivalent; (b) the program must ensure that a baccalaureate degree, which meets ACICS standards, is awarded upon completion of baccalaureate degree requirements or concurrently with the award of the master's degree; and (c) the baccalaureate degree program must include in its curricular requirements sufficient and appropriate bridge to master's-level courses in the field of study and must be approved by ACICS.</del></p>	7/1/2016
<b>2-3-900 – Debarment</b>	<p>The Council may bar a person or entity, including spouses and closely related family groups as defined in Section 2-2-401, from being an owner, senior administrator, or governing board member of an ACICS-accredited institution if that person or entity was found guilty of fraudulent or criminal behavior; was debarred by a government agency or an accrediting agency; or was an owner, senior administrator, or governing board member of an institution that lost its accreditation as a result of a denial or suspension action or that closed without providing a teach-out or refunds to students matriculating at the time of closure.</p> <p>The Council will notify the person(s) or entity whom it intends to bar as the result of denial or suspension action within four months following the loss of the institution's accreditation. It will notify the person(s) or entity whom it intends to bar as the result of the closing of an institution within a reasonable period of time following the closure. In each case, the Council will forward an intent to bar notice by both electronic and certified mail to the last institutional mailing address known to the Council, unless the Council has received updated mailing information following the institution's closure or loss of accreditation. Those individuals or entities will be considered notified when the Council has forwarded the intent to bar notice in accordance with these procedures.</p> <p>The intent to bar notice will inform the person(s) or entity that they are entitled to present information and materials in writing <u>or in person to challenge appeal</u> the intent to bar at the next scheduled meeting of the Council. The notice will stipulate that if they intend to <u>challenge appeal</u> the intent to bar, the person(s) or entity must inform the Council office in writing within ten days of receipt of the notice as to whether they will <u>challenge appeal</u> the intent to bar in writing.</p> <p>A debarment order may be issued by the Council as a result of its consideration of the facts presented. <del>Notice of t</del> <u>The Council's decision will be sent to the individual(s) person(s) or entity by electronic and certified mail following their challenge appeal before the Council.</u></p> <p><u>The Council's decision is final if the person or entity elects not to appeal within ten days of Council notification. The Council decision is also final following appeal.</u></p> <p>The Council retains final discretion to establish the terms and length of the debarment. The length of debarment will <del>vary depending on the circumstances that led to the debarment decision</del> be for a</p>	7/1/2016

Section	Criteria Revision	Date Modified
2-3-900 – Debarment <i>(continued)</i>	<p>period of at least three years; <u>however, it may vary depending on the circumstances that led to the debarment decision</u>. Individual circumstances may justify a longer period of debarment.</p> <p>Person(s) or entities barred by the Council may appeal this decision to the Council in accordance with such debarment appeals procedures as the Council may establish. The Council's decision is final if the person or entity elects not to appeal within ten days of Council notification or if the Council affirms its decision following appeal, and no additional appeal rights are available under these procedures.</p>	7/1/2016
Glossary	<b>Placement.</b> Working in the field of study or acquiring a credential that directly benefits the graduate's existing employment.	7/1/2016
Appendix C – Institutional Publication Requirements	<p><b>Performance Information Disclosure</b></p> <p><u>“These are the data reported to ACICS by the institution in its most recent Campus Accountability Report.”</u></p>	7/1/2016
3-1-704. <i>Performance Information.</i>	<p>Institutions <u>Each campus shall routinely provide reliable information to the public on their its performance, including student achievement as determined by the institution information, that includes, at a minimum, retention, placement, and licensure examination pass rates (where applicable). The information provided shall be for the entire campus and for each program as reported to ACICS in its most recent Campus Accountability Report.</u></p>	7/1/2016
Section 3-1-412(a):	<p>An institution shall ensure that any person or entity engaged in admissions or recruitment activities on its behalf is communicating current and accurate information regarding courses and programs, <u>student achievement disclosures (See Section 3-1-704), services, tuition, terms, and operating policies. The institution must maintain documentation that demonstrates that it systematically monitors its recruitment activities.</u></p>	7/1/2016
3-1-203. <i>Data Integrity.</i>	<p><u>All data reported to ACICS for any purpose is expected to reflect an accurate and verifiable portrayal of institutional performance and is subject to review for integrity, accuracy, and completeness.</u></p> <p><b>3-1-203204. Financial Stability.</b></p> <p>...</p>	7/1/2016
Chapter 1 – An Overview of the Council	<p><b>Statement of Mission</b></p> <p><u>The mission of the Accrediting Council for Independent Colleges and Schools is to advance educational excellence at independent, nonpublic career schools, colleges, and organizations in the United States and abroad. This is achieved through a deliberate and thorough accrediting process of quality assurance and enhancement as well as ethical business and educational practices.</u></p> <p><b>Introduction Definition of Accreditation</b></p> <p>Accreditation is an independent appraisal of an institution during which the institution's overall educational quality (including outcomes), professional status among similar institutions, financial</p>	

Section	Criteria Revision	Date Modified
Chapter 1 – An Overview of the Council	stability, and operational ethics are self-evaluated and judged by peers. It is a voluntary activity separate and distinct from business licensing, authority to award educational credentials, and eligibility to administer student financial assistance.	7/1/2016
<i>(continued)</i>	<p data-bbox="342 296 651 317"><b><u>Definition of Academic Quality</u></b></p> <p data-bbox="342 348 1243 428"><u>ACICS defines academic quality as the overall performance of the institution in the context of its mission and as measured by the extent to which the institution achieves its intended student learning and student success outcomes.</u></p> <p data-bbox="342 459 1252 539"><u>Student learning outcomes involve assessment of skill and competency attainment. Student success outcomes include student retention or persistence; employment or placement; and student, graduate and employer satisfaction.</u></p> <p data-bbox="342 571 1243 764"><u>The effectiveness of the institution is demonstrated by its compliance with accreditation standards as well as its continuous striving for enhancement of quality. ACICS assesses academic quality in the following areas: mission and objectives; campus effectiveness planning; student outcomes; financial stability; recruitment and admission practices; organizational structure and administration; student services; academic program and curriculum; quality of faculty and instruction; physical facilities; library and learning resources; and publication and disclosure of student achievement.</u></p> <p data-bbox="342 795 505 816">1-1-100 – Bylaws</p> <p data-bbox="342 848 375 869">....</p> <p data-bbox="342 900 553 921">1-1-200 – Recognition</p> <p data-bbox="342 953 375 974">...</p> <p data-bbox="342 1005 626 1026">1-1-300 – Public Participation</p> <p data-bbox="342 1058 375 1079">...</p>	

**Glossary**

**Employer Satisfaction.** The level of employer satisfaction is a required element of the Campus Effectiveness Plan (see Section 3-1-111 of the Accreditation Criteria); Employer satisfaction and the level of satisfaction are defined by the campus institution based upon information collected, typically via a survey, on a regular basis from employers who have, ~~or might~~, hired graduates from the of programs offered by the campus institution. Recommended information includes a survey of local employers as well as non-local employers who have hired graduates. Satisfaction questions should cover different aspects of career preparation in general (such as professionalism, foundational and soft skills), as well as specific skills in the particular field and the overall satisfaction of the employer with the preparation of graduates to perform tasks which utilize such skills provided by the institution.

**Graduate Satisfaction Level.** The level of graduate satisfaction is a required element of the Campus Effectiveness Plan (see Section 3-1-111 of the Accreditation Criteria); Graduate satisfaction and the level of satisfaction are defined by the campus institution based upon information collected on a regular basis from students who have graduated from the programs offered by the campus institution. Recommended information includes the results of surveys of all graduates who left the institution at least 30 days six months prior to being contacted. Satisfaction questions should cover different aspects of the program and the campus institution as well as overall satisfaction of the graduate with the preparation provided by the campus for the position provided by the institution.

7/1/2016

Section	Criteria Revision	Date Modified
<p>Glossary <i>(continued)</i></p>	<p><b>Graduation Rates (when available).</b> ACICS is developing a measure of graduation rates that is comprehensive and applicable at the program, campus, and institution level. Once the measure has been implemented through the Campus Accountability Report and validated, the graduation rate will be a required element of the Campus Effectiveness Plan (see Section 3-1-111 of the Accreditation Criteria). The comprehensive graduation rate is defined by ACICS in terms of the number of students who have completed or graduated during a reporting year, divided by the number of completers and graduates plus the number of students who have withdrawn, and expressed as a percent. The graduation rate, also called the graduates-to-leavers ratio, is calculated at both the program and campus levels, based upon data submitted for the annual Campus Accountability Report (CAR) and according to the detailed formula and terms defined in the Guidelines and Instructions for the Campus Accountability Report, which is available on the ACICS website. The detailed formula includes definitions, adjustments, and exclusions for calculating completers, graduates and withdrawals.</p> <p><b>Outcomes, Campus.</b> The effectiveness of an institution is determined by its outcomes. <u>The intended result or end result of an activity or process in the assessment of effectiveness.</u> In determining effectiveness, <u>campuses</u> institutions are required to evaluate the following outcomes: placement rates (in-field, related field); <u>retention rates</u>; graduate licensure pass rates relative to minimum quantitative standards for state licensing examinations; employer satisfaction as determined by periodic surveys of those who employ graduates; graduate satisfaction as determined by periodic surveys of graduates; and student satisfaction as determined by periodic surveys of current students, <u>and other student learning outcomes.</u> <u>Campuses</u> Institutions also may use additional outcomes in evaluating effectiveness.</p>	7/1/2016
	<p><b>Placement Rate.</b> The placement rate is a required element of the Campus Effectiveness Plan (see Section 3-1-111 of the Accreditation Criteria): The Placement Rate is defined by ACICS in terms of the total number of completers and graduates minus those who are not placed (employed) in their field of study or a related field of study, divided by the total number of completers and graduates <u>and expressed as a percent.</u> The placement rate is calculated at both the program and campus levels, based upon data submitted for the annual Campus Accountability Report (CAR) and according to the detailed formula and terms defined in the Guidelines and Instructions for the Campus Accountability Report, which is available on the ACICS website. The detailed formula includes definitions of <u>placed in field and related field placement</u>, adjustments, and exclusions for students not available for placement. <u>Three years of placement rate data are required in the CEP,</u> and the institution is required to define and publish goals for placement rates. ACICS also publishes standards for campus-level and program-level placement rates which accredited institutions are expected to meet or exceed. Institutions falling below Council standards are subject to planning requirements, monitoring, show cause directives or negative action including loss of program approval, campus inclusion or institutional accreditation.</p>	7/1/2016
	<p><b>Retention Rate.</b> The retention rate is a required element of the Campus Effectiveness Plan (see Section 3-1-111 of the Accreditation Criteria): The Retention Rate is defined by ACICS in terms of the total student enrollment, minus those students who withdraw, divided by the total student enrollment and expressed as a percent. The retention rate is calculated at both the program and campus levels, based upon data submitted for the annual Campus Accountability Report (CAR) and according to the detailed formula and terms defined in the <i>Guidelines and Instructions for the Campus Accountability Report</i>, which is available on the ACICS website. The detailed formula includes definitions, adjustments, and exclusions for calculating total enrollment and withdrawals. <u>Three years of retention rate data are required in the CEP,</u> and the institution is required to define and publish goals for retention rates. ACICS also publishes standards for campus-level and program-level retention rates which accredited institutions are expected to meet or exceed. Institutions falling below Council standards are subject to planning requirements, monitoring, show cause directives or negative action including loss of program approval, campus inclusion or institutional accreditation.</p>	



Section	Criteria Revision	Date Modified
<p><b>Student Learning Outcomes.</b> Concise measurable statements of direct and indirect learning outcomes with assessments that specify what students will know, be able to do, or demonstrate as a result of a specific, planned education experience. <u>Student learning Outcomes</u> are expressed as measurable knowledge, skills, abilities or attitudes.</p>	<p><i>Direct and Indirect Assessment of Learning Outcomes.</i> See Direct Assessment Competency-based Programs for examples.</p>	7/1/2016
<p><b>Student Satisfaction.</b> <u>Student satisfaction and the level of satisfaction are defined by the campus based upon information collected, typically via a survey, on a regular basis from students who are currently enrolled at the campus. Satisfaction questions should cover different aspects of the current program of study and the services provided by the campus to prepare the student for the workforce.</u></p>		7/1/2016
<p><b>3-1-113. Evaluation of the Campus and Institutional Effectiveness Plans.</b></p>	<p><del>Distributed enterprise institutions and a</del>All campuses 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. <del>Distributed enterprise institutions and all campuses shall maintain documentation of historical outcomes and show evidence of how this documentation is used to achieve expected goals. Distributed enterprise institutions and a</del>All campuses should adjust their goals accordingly as a result of an evaluation of the <del>Institutional and</del> Campus Effectiveness Plans.</p>	7/1/2016
<p><b>3-1-112. Implementation and Monitoring of the Campus and Institutional Effectiveness Plans.</b></p>	<p><del>Distributed enterprise institutions and a</del>All 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 <del>Campus and Institutional</del> Effectiveness Plans.</p>	7/1/2016
<p><b>3-1-111. Campus and Institutional Effectiveness Plans.</b></p>	<p>Each campus shall have on file a Campus Effectiveness Plan (CEP). A main and its branches may share aspects of an CEP, such as the mission, but each main and branch campus 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 campus. A centrally controlled institution must also submit a consolidated Institutional Effectiveness Plan (IEP) containing information and data on the institution as a whole. The IEP of a centrally controlled institution is due on or before September 15 annually.</p> <p>For the Campus Effectiveness Plan, the following six elements, at a minimum, will be evaluated for <u>campus institutional</u> effectiveness:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. student retention rates;</li> <li>2. <del>student</del> placement rates;</li> <li>3. <u>level of student satisfaction</u>;</li> <li>4. level of graduate satisfaction;</li> <li>5. level of employer satisfaction; <u>and</u></li> <li>6. <del>graduation rates [when available]</del>.</li> </ol>	

Section	Criteria Revision	Date Modified
<p><b>3-1-111. <i>Campus and Institutional Effectiveness Plans.</i></b> (continued)</p>	<p>In compiling the data needed to assess the six elements, each 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 six elements.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Each campus shall publish annual placement and retention goals. In formulating these goals, the campus shall take into account the retention and placement rates from the previous three Campus Accountability Reports and the specific activities that will be undertaken to meet those goals. The activities must demonstrate the campus' ability to maintain or improve retention and placement outcomes each year.</p> <p><u>Institutions Campuses are encouraged to include additional information in their plans which is relevant to improving their overall effectiveness: elements in their plans, such as graduation rates, cohort default rates, and matrices of financial stability, which are relevant to improving their overall effectiveness.</u></p> <p>For the Institutional Effectiveness Plan of a distributed enterprise institution, the following elements will be evaluated for institutional effectiveness, at a minimum:</p> <p>PLANS</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Mission and Objectives of the distributed enterprise institution</li> <li>2. Strategic Planning Objectives</li> <li>3. Long Range Planning Goals and Timelines for: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Expansion and addition of campuses</li> <li>b. Student enrollment</li> <li>c. Retention and placement rates</li> </ol> </li> <li>4. Plans for Continuous Improvement</li> </ol> <p>DATA</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Three (3) years of retention and placement trend data for the institution</li> <li>2. Three (3) years of retention and placement trend data for each program</li> <li>3. Student demographic data for the institution</li> <li>4. Comparison and analysis of baseline data between campuses</li> <li>5. Analysis of cohort default rates for the institution</li> <li>6. Assessment of learning outcomes across the institution</li> <li>7. Graduation Rates</li> </ol> <p>PROCESS</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Composition of the institution's IEP team</li> <li>2. Institutional process for curriculum review</li> <li>3. Compliance monitoring and internal controls</li> </ol>	7/1/2016
		7/1/2016

Section	Criteria Revision	Date Modified
3-1-110 – CAMPUS INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS	An important indication of the overall effectiveness of an ACICS-accredited institution is the degree to which it meets its own predetermined educational outcomes. Each campus of an ACICS-accredited institution, consistent with its mission, shall develop and implement a Campus Effectiveness Plan that identifies how it plans to assess and continuously improve its educational programs and processes, and that addresses its ability to meet the educational and occupational objectives of its programs. In this document, each campus should attempt to incorporate short-term objectives to be accomplished in order to achieve the mission of the institution as it applies to the campus and its future goals.	7/1/2016
Title I Chapter 2 Eligibility Criteria	<p><b>INTRODUCTION</b></p> <p>The Council fulfills an evaluative and accrediting function for a particular sector of postsecondary education. This function has been deemed appropriate by the U.S. Department of Education <u>and by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA)</u> through the recognition of ACICS.</p> <p><del>The mission of the Accrediting Council for Independent Colleges and Schools is to advance educational excellence at independent, nonpublic career schools, colleges, and organizations in the United States and abroad. This is achieved through a deliberate and thorough accreditation process of quality assurance and enhancement as well as ethical business and educational practices.</del></p>	7/1/2016
3-1-410 – ADMISSIONS AND RECRUITMENT	<p>It is up to an institution to establish its own admissions criteria. It is the responsibility of ACICS to ensure that all who are enrolled are accorded equal educational opportunity.</p> <p>The ultimate responsibility for the monitoring of the activities of an institution’s employees, vendors, contractors, or agents in the referral, recruiting, evaluation, and admissions processes is the responsibility of always remains with the institution. The activities of these individuals must be supervised by the institution. An institution may not delegate without supervision these activities to anyone whose economic incentives are to recruit prospects through means that are unethical or subject to public criticism or to admit ill-prepared applicants. The institution may not contract, directly or indirectly, with third parties who are generally unfamiliar with the institution. “Non-employees” are independent contractors who are not considered “employees” under the Internal Revenue Code.</p> <p>Institutions participating in Title IV programs must be aware of regulations imposed by the U.S. Department of Education as they apply to recruiting practices.</p>	7/1/2016
3-1-541. <i>Faculty Preparation.</i>	<p>... Credentials of faculty who are graduates from institutions outside the United States must be evaluated by a member of the Association of International Credentials Evaluators (AICE), <u>the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (AACRAO)</u> or the National Association of Credential Evaluation Services (NACES) to determine the equivalency of the credentials awarded by institutions in the United States.</p> <p>... by a member of the Association of International Credentials Evaluators (AICE), <u>the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (AACRAO)</u> or the National Association of Credential Evaluations Services (NACES) to determine the equivalency of the credentials awarded by institutions in the United States. ACICS, if unable to determine qualifications, may require the translation and/or evaluation of transcripts in languages other than English.</p>	7/1/2016

Section	Criteria Revision	Date Modified
Glossary of Definitions	<p><b>Lecture.</b> A <u>learning environment</u> setting, usually a classroom, where a teacher instructs students in the theory, principles, or history of an academic or vocational subject. To maximally benefit from such instruction, a student is assumed to have done outside preparation. Two hours of preparation for each hour of lecture instruction are generally assumed.</p> <p><b>Laboratory.</b> A <u>learning environment</u> setting, usually with equipment, where students apply knowledge or instruction acquired in another setting, usually a class lecture or outside reading, to enhance skills and solve problems. Normally, two hours of work in a laboratory <u>environment, under the supervision of an instructor,</u> setting with an instructor present has the credit equivalency of one hour of classroom lecture.</p> <p><b>In-Service Training.</b> Special planned and systematic experiences sponsored by an institution and related to curriculum and instruction that affect the majority of the faculty in a collective fashion. In-service education has as its major goal the updating of teachers in (1) subject matter, (2) curriculum concepts, (3) new theories and techniques of instruction, and (4) new educational media. <del>The most common activity is a lecture by an outside speaker on a subject related to curriculum, the institution, or a societal issue.</del></p>	7/1/2016
3-3-302. Assignments.	(a) A bachelor's degree and appropriate coursework in the assigned subject are required for faculty members teaching applied general education. Instructors at a minimum shall have earned 15 semester or equivalent hours of coursework through a combination of hours from an associate's, bachelor's, <del>and/or</del> master's, <u>and/or doctoral</u> level coursework in the area of their teaching assignment.	7/1/2016
3-2-104. Assignments.	<p>The requirements for full- and part-time faculty members teaching in the referenced subject areas are as follows:</p> <p>(a) A bachelor's degree and appropriate coursework in the assigned subject are required for faculty members teaching <u>applied</u> general education and other academic courses. <u>Instructors teaching general education shall hold a minimum of a master's degree. Instructors shall have a minimum of 18 semester or equivalent hours of coursework in their teaching discipline. At internationally based institutions, transcripts in languages other than English for general education instructors must be translated into English.</u></p>	7/1/2016
3-3-303. Teaching Load.	<p>An instructor's teaching load, including night school, shall not exceed 32 clock hours per week, except that an overload of not more than one subject per term for additional compensation is permitted. Teaching loads may differ when using alternative methods of instruction and must be commensurate with the type of delivery method utilized. For purposes of this calculation, assigned courses offered by nontraditional or distance learning modes of instruction are deemed to consist of one clock hour per week for each unit of academic credit awarded.</p> <p><u>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, and community relations responsibilities of the instructor.</u></p>	7/1/2016

Section	Criteria Revision	Date Modified
3-2-101. <i>Teaching Load.</i>	<p>An instructor's teaching load, including night school, shall not exceed 32 clock hours per week, except that an overload of not more than one subject per term for additional compensation is permitted. Teaching loads may differ when using alternative methods of instruction and must be commensurate with the type of delivery method utilized. For purposes of this calculation, assigned courses offered by nontraditional or distance learning modes of instruction are deemed to consist of one clock hour per week for each unit of academic credit awarded.</p> <p><u>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, and community relations responsibilities of the instructor.</u></p>	7/1/2016
Glossary of Definitions	<p><b>Community Resources.</b> Individuals, organizations, or businesses that provide information, guidance or support to an institution, such as professional and trade associations, employers, guest speakers, and advisory committees. <u>A variety of individuals, organizations, or businesses that provide information, guidance or support to a specific program of study or career opportunity, such as professional and trade associations, employers, and guest speakers. An advisory committee may be utilized as a community resource provided it is supplemented by other community resources.</u></p>	7/1/2016
3-1-512 <i>Program Planning .</i>	<p>(c) Resources of the community shall be utilized to enrich the program. <u>The use of community resources shall be varied in each program and shall be utilized to enhance student enrichment and potential career opportunities. (See Glossary definition for Community Resources).</u></p>	7/1/2016
2-1-805. <i>Unannounced Visits.</i>	<p>The Council, at its discretion, may direct an unannounced visit to occur at an institution, <u>at any time</u>, 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.</p>	7/1/2016
2-3-200 – ACCREDITATION DEFERRED OR CONDITIONED	<p>When Council determines there is insufficient evidence available to make a decision, they may defer action until a later date pending receipt of additional information. In such cases, the Council will provide in writing the reasons for the deferral, state what the institution needs to provide with sufficient time for the institution to respond, and specify the response date. Based on the nature and/or number of identified deficiencies, the Council may require attendance of key administrators at a workshop and/or consultation.</p>	1/1/2016
2-3-210. <i>Deferral.</i>	<p>Deferral is, in effect, “no action at this time” and is not a negative action. Therefore, deferral is not an appealable action. Neither is a deferral a final action. In all cases of deferral on reevaluation of accredited institutions, the Council will extend the present grant of accreditation for a period sufficient for the institution to provide the information needed, <u>including time for procedural due process following the Council's review of the information not to exceed twelve months, if the longest program is less than one year in length; eighteen months, if the longest program is at least one year, but less than two years in length; and two years, if the longest program is at least two years in length.</u></p>	

Section	Criteria Revision	Date Modified
2-3-220. <i>Compliance Warning.</i>	<p><u>When the Council determines that an institution is not in compliance with the Accreditation Criteria, the Council will issue a compliance warning. The institution will be provided in writing with the areas of noncompliance and will be required to demonstrate corrective action for review by ACICS.</u></p> <p><u>A show-cause directive or a denial action/suspension order may be issued by ACICS as the result of this review as described in Section 2-3-230 or 2-3-402. Following receipt of a compliance warning, the institution must bring itself into compliance within the time frames specified in Title II, Chapter 3, or the institution will be subject to a final adverse action.</u></p> <p><u>When the reasons for the compliance warning are satisfied, the action may be lifted either by the President in cases where no evaluation is involved or by the ACICS Council in cases where evaluation of additional material is required and following such evaluation.</u></p>	1/1/2016
2-3-403230. <i>Show-Cause Directive.</i>	<p><u>When the Council determines that an institution is not in compliance, and is unlikely to become in compliance, accreditation of an institution is subject to suspension action (other than summary suspension under Section 2-2-301) because the Council determines has reason to believe that the institution is not, or may not be, in compliance with the Accreditation Criteria, the institution will be provided in writing with the alleged deficiencies areas of noncompliance and will be invited to “show cause” why its accreditation should not be suspended or otherwise conditioned.</u></p> <p>A show-cause directive is not a negative or conditioning action. Rather, it is issued to an institution for it to come forward and prove that a negative or conditioning action should not be taken. However, the opportunity to show cause before the Council will be considered to be a hearing as defined in Section 2-3-500. A suspension order or denial action may be issued by ACICS as the result of this hearing, and such action is considered a final action which may only be appealed to the Review Board of Appeals as described in Section 2-3-600. Following receipt of a show-cause directive, the institution must bring itself into compliance within the time frames specified in Title II, Chapter 3, or the institution will be subject to final adverse action.</p> <p>In many circumstances, it is possible for an institution to respond to a show-cause directive in writing by which it demonstrates correction of the condition upon which the directive was based. When the reasons for the show-cause are satisfied, the directive may be lifted either by the President in cases where no evaluation is involved or by ACICS in cases where evaluation of additional material is required and following such evaluation. All institutions directed by the Council to show cause why their accreditation should not be suspended or otherwise conditioned will be directed to submit a school closure plan and may be required to submit a teach-out agreement as described in Section 2-2-303 of the Accreditation Criteria.</p>	1/1/2016
2-3-800240 – <i>PROBATION</i>	<p>Probation is a status that the Council may impose on an institution if the institution is unable to demonstrate that it consistently operates in accordance with the <i>Accreditation Criteria</i>.</p>	1/1/2016
2-3-801241. <i>Imposition.</i>	<p>Probation may be imposed by the Council either when it continues a show-cause directive after at least one hearing either in person or in writing, or after an institution has notified the Council that it intends to appeal a denial action.</p>	1/1/2016
2-3-802242. <i>Result of Probation.</i>	<p>The Council will not accept any applications for new programs or new campuses from any institution on probation unless the institution receives approval in advance to submit such an application.</p>	1/1/2016

Section	Criteria Revision	Date Modified
2-3- <del>803</del> 243. Probation Lifted.	Probation does not expire automatically. Instead, the institution is obligated to demonstrate to the Council that the conditions or circumstances which initially led to the imposition of probation have been corrected before probation will be lifted. Probation may be continued even if the show-cause directive has been vacated. The Council may order a special visit at the institution's expense before lifting probation.	1/1/2016
2-3- <del>804</del> 244. Notification of Probation.	The Council will notify the U.S. Secretary of Education, appropriate state regulatory agencies, other appropriate accrediting agencies, and the public of its decision to place an institution on probation. The institution is required to notify immediately in writing its current and prospective students that it has been placed on probation by its accrediting agency.	1/1/2016
	2-3-300 – Accreditation Denied ...	1/1/2016
	2-3-400 – Accreditation Withdrawn ...	
	2-3- <del>404</del> 403. Procedural Guarantees <u>for Withdrawal by Suspension.</u> ...	
	2-3- <del>900</del> 800 – Special and Fact Visits ...	
	2-3- <del>1000</del> 200 – Debarment ...	
2-1-300. Renewal of Accreditation.	It is the responsibility of the institution to file an application and remit the appropriate fees for a renewal of accreditation by September 30th of the year prior to the last year of the grant of accreditation. This also involves submission of the institution's renewal self-study, with supporting documents. Institutions that have not submitted a renewal self-study by December 1st of the year preceding expiration of the grant, and have not requested and received an appropriate extension or notified the Council of intent to voluntarily withdraw its accreditation, may be <u>issued a compliance warning</u> directed to show cause why its accreditation should not be withdrawn, suspended, or otherwise conditioned....	1/1/2016
2-1-807. Program Length and Tuition and Fees.	ACICS will determine average program lengths and tuition and fees annually based on information collected in the Annual Accountability Reports and will provide these data to all accredited institutions. Institutions with program lengths that are more than one standard deviation from the average will be required to submit an explanation for the deviation. If the Council does not accept the explanation, it may require a consultation between ACICS and the institution, direct an on-site evaluation, issue a <u>show-cause directive compliance warning</u> , or withhold inclusion of the program from the institution's current grant of accreditation.	1/1/2016

Section	Criteria Revision	Date Modified
2-1-808. Financial Review.	<p>The Council reviews the Annual Financial Report, audited financial statements, and other relevant information to monitor each institution's financial condition. When this review indicates that an institution's financial condition may be weak or deteriorating, the Council will require the institution to furnish Quarterly Financial Reports, a Financial Improvement Plan, or other interim narrative reports that demonstrate the actions the institution is taking to improve its financial condition. If the Council determines the institution no longer complies with the Council's requirements for financial stability, the Council will <u>issue a compliance warning</u>, issue a show-cause directive, or otherwise take negative action and require the institution to demonstrate compliance within the time frames de-scribed in Title II, Chapter 3. These time frames may be extended at the sole discretion of the Council for good cause, including evidence that there has been significant improvement in the deficient area(s) and the applicable time frame does not provide sufficient time to demonstrate full compliance, e.g., significant improvement in financial stability. Institutions that are required to submit interim financial reports or that are determined to be out of compli-ance with the Council's standards for financial stability are considered to be on financial review and are subject to additional restrictions regarding the initiation of branches and learning sites.</p>	1/1/2016
2-1-809. Student Achievement Review.	<p>The Council reviews the Campus Accountability Report (CAR) and <del>Institutional Accountability Report (IAR)</del> to monitor performance in terms of student achievement at both the campus and program levels. Measures will include retention; placement; and licensure pass rates, if applicable. When this review indicates that student achievement is below Council standards, the Council will require the institution to add an Improvement Plan within its Campus Effectiveness Plan (CEP) and/or Institutional Effectiveness Plan (IEP). If the Council determines the institution is out of compliance with the Council's requirement for student achievement, the Council will issue a <del>C</del>compliance <del>W</del>warning and require the institution to demonstrate compliance with the next year's CAR submission. This time frame may be extended at the sole discretion of the Council for good cause, including evidence that there has been significant improvement in the deficient area(s) and the applicable time frame does not provide sufficient time to demonstrate full compliance, e.g., improvement in retention, placement, or licensure pass rates.</p>	
2-2-121. Changes to Existing Programs.	<p>Changes to existing or currently approved programs fall under (a) extensive changes and (b) non-substantive changes.</p> <p>(a) Extensive Changes. An extensive change to existing program application process must be initiated and approval received prior to implementation. Failure to do so will result in a <del>show-cause action</del> <u>compliance warning</u> for offering an unapproved program. The following changes will be considered substantive changes to the institution's scope of accreditation and require approval per Section 2-2-100 Substantive Changes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i.) A 25% increase in the number of clock or credit hours awarded for successful completion of an existing program.</li> <li>(ii.) a change from clock hours to credit hours</li> </ul>	



Section	Criteria Revision	Date Modified
2-3-700 – Complaints and Adverse Information	<p data-bbox="342 233 1240 348">The role of the Council in resolving complaints and investigating adverse information is to determine whether the institution is out of compliance with one or more accrediting standards to which the complaint is addressed or to which the adverse information applies. After such determination, ACICS may then do one of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="402 373 1203 401">(a) dismiss the complaint or terminate further investigation of the adverse information;</li> <li data-bbox="402 415 1240 499">(b) postpone a final action on the complaint or adverse information if there is evidence that the institution is making progress to rectify the situation or if more investigation is necessary; or</li> <li data-bbox="402 514 1240 598">(c) notify the institution that, on the basis of information available, ACICS has determined that the institution is failing to comply with the Accreditation Criteria and that the institution is: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="440 613 732 640">(i) <u>issued a compliance warning</u></li> <li data-bbox="440 655 1224 707">(ii) directed to show cause why its accreditation should not be suspended, revoked, or otherwise conditioned;</li> <li data-bbox="440 722 1214 774">(iii) directed to submit a report to ACICS detailing plans for rectifying the area(s) of noncompliance; or</li> <li data-bbox="440 789 932 816">(iv) directed to undergo a special on site evaluation..</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p data-bbox="342 842 1240 894">The Council will inform the complainant of the determination by the Council and the disposition of the complaint.</p>	1/1/2016
Appendix E – Guidelines for Institutionally Funded Student Aid	<p data-bbox="342 989 1240 1184">In evaluating institutionally funded student aid, ACICS will consider the characteristics listed below. These characteristics are not listed in any priority order. Any institution whose aid program is not in accordance with any or all of these characteristics may be subject to a <u>compliance warning</u> directive by ACICS to show cause why its grant of accreditation should not be suspended, revoked, or otherwise conditioned. The greater the number of these characteristics evident in an institution's grant program, the greater the presumption of acceptability. ACICS will, however, review each institutional grant program in its entirety.</p> <p data-bbox="342 1220 370 1247">...</p>	1/1/2016

Section	Criteria Revision	Date Modified
3-7-502. Assignments.	<p>Faculty shall be assigned in terms of their major and minor areas of academic preparation and related experience. The size of the faculty shall be appropriate for the enrollment. All doctorate program faculty should have appropriate graduate and terminal degrees. All courses are to be taught by faculty possessing terminal degrees. Professional certification is not a substitute for a terminal degree. The institution also should encourage faculty members to engage in practical or scholarly research and to publish in professional journals.</p> <p>The principal faculty members must possess doctoral/terminal professional degrees from accredited institutions. These individuals also must demonstrate expertise in the field of study taught and possess applicable experience in participating in a doctorate degree program.</p> <p><u>All doctoral degree courses shall be taught by faculty possessing doctoral or terminal professional degrees, related to the courses taught, from accredited or government-recognized international institutions. These individuals also must demonstrate expertise in the field of study taught, possess applicable professional experience for participating in a doctoral degree program and maintain current professional certification in their discipline, where applicable.</u></p> <p><u>Faculty shall be assigned in terms of their major and minor areas of academic preparation, related professional experience, and appropriate required professional certification to practice in the field. The size of the faculty shall be appropriate for the enrollment in the program. The institution shall demonstrate that faculty members are engaged in practical or scholarly research and are encouraged to publish in professional journals.</u></p>	1/1/2016
2-2-110. Evaluation, Approval and Monitoring of Substantive Change Activity.	<p>All activity for which approval is sought will be evaluated by ACICS before approval is granted. Following is a description of those evaluations.</p> <p>(a) <i>Branch Campus.</i> Initial inclusion of a branch campus within the scope of the accreditation of the institution may be granted by the President upon receipt of all required information. An institution proposing the initiation of a new location must follow the procedures as outlined by the Council and disclosed on its website. A new location must receive initial inclusion before advertising, recruiting, or enrolling students at the proposed location. The Council reserves the right to require a preliminary visit to any potential branch campus prior to the granting of initial inclusion.</p> <p>A branch campus that is granted initial inclusion by the President 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.</p> <p>A decision regarding the final inclusion of a branch campus 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 location will be required to attend an Accreditation Workshop and to submit additional documentation as outlined and disclosed on the ACICS Web site. 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 institution.</p> <p>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 a branch campus 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.</p>	1/1/2016

Section	Criteria Revision	Date Modified
2-2-110. Evaluation, Approval and Monitoring of Substantive Change Activity.	<p>(b) <i>Learning Site</i>. The President is authorized to evaluate and approve additions to a main or branch campuses that are apart from the primary location of that campus. Educational activities at a learning site are eligible to be evaluated for inclusion within the scope of the accreditation of the managing campus provided that the learning site has been established to meet a specific educational need or condition and is authorized by the appropriate governmental education authority, if applicable.</p>	1/1/2016
Continued	<p>The managing campus proposing the initiation of a learning site must submit a Learning Site Application. The managing campus must assure the Council that the educational activities at the learning site complement the overall objectives of the institution. Based on its review of the application materials, ACICS may (1) grant final inclusion of the learning site or (2) deny the application.</p> <p>A learning site that is granted final inclusion by the President 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.</p> <p>All additions to the campuses of an institution are evaluated during an institution's regular evaluation for a renewal of accreditation.</p>	
2-3-1000 – Debarment	<p>The Council may bar a person <u>or entity</u>, including spouses and closely related family groups as defined in Section 2-2-401, from being an owner, <del>or senior administrator manager, or governing board member</del> of an ACICS-accredited institution if that person <u>or entity was found guilty of fraudulent or criminal behavior, was debarred by a government agency or an accrediting agency, or</u> was an owner, <del>or manager senior administrator, or governing board member</del> of an institution that lost its accreditation as a result of a denial or suspension action or that closed without providing a teach-out or refunds to students matriculating at the time of closure.</p> <p>The Council will notify <del>the a person, or</del> person(s) <u>or entity</u> whom it intends to bar as the result of denial or suspension action within four months following the loss of the institution's accreditation. It will notify the <del>a person, or</del> person(s) <u>or entity</u> whom it intends to bar as the result of the closing of an institution within a reasonable period of time following the closure; <del>normally not more than six months following the closure of the institution.</del> In each case, the Council will forward an intent to bar notice by both express <u>electronic</u> and first-class <u>certified</u> mail to the last institutional mailing address known to the Council, unless the Council has received updated mailing information following the institution's closure or loss of accreditation. Those individuals <u>or entities</u> will be considered notified when the Council has forwarded the intent to bar notice in accordance with these procedures.</p> <p>The intent to bar notice will inform the person(s) or entity that they are entitled to present information and materials in writing <del>or in person</del> to challenge the intent to bar at the next scheduled meeting of the Council. The notice will stipulate that if they intend to challenge the intent to bar, the person(s) <u>or entity</u> must inform the Council office in writing within ten days of receipt of the notice as to <del>whether they desire a personal appearance before the Council, or</del> whether they will challenge the intent to bar in writing. A debarment order may be issued by the Council as a result of its consideration of the facts presented. Notice of the Council's decision will be sent to the individual(s) by electronic <del>and first-class</del> and certified mail <del>within ten days</del> following their challenge before the Council.</p> <p>The Council retains final discretion to establish the terms and length of the debarment. The length of debarment will vary depending on the circumstances that led to the debarment decision, but it typically will be for a period of at least one year <del>and not more than three years</del>. Individual circumstances may justify a longer period of debarment.</p> <p><del>A person or</del> Person(s) <u>or entities</u> barred by the Council may appeal this decision to the Council in accordance with such debarment appeals procedures as the Council may establish. The Council's decision is final if the person <u>or entity</u> elects not to appeal <u>within ten days of Council notification</u></p>	

Section	Criteria Revision	Date Modified
2-3-1000 – Debarment  (continued)	<p>or if the Council affirms its decision following appeal, and no additional appeal rights are available under these procedures.</p> <p>After considering an individual or entity’s challenge to the intent to bar or when no challenge is presented, the Council’s decision to bar an individual is final. No appeal rights are available under these procedures.</p>	4/9/2015
2-1-809. Student Achievement Review.	<p>The Council reviews the Campus Accountability Report (CAR) and Institutional Accountability Report (IAR) to monitor performance in terms of student achievement at both the campus and program levels. Measures will include retention; placement; and licensure pass rates, if applicable. When this review indicates that <u>student achievement is below Council standards</u>, the Council will require the institution to add an Improvement Plan within its Campus Effectiveness Plan (CEP) and/or Institutional Effectiveness Plan (IEP). If the Council determines the institution <del>no longer complies</del> <u>is out of compliance</u> with the Council’s requirement for student achievement, the Council will issue a <u>Compliance</u> Warning a <del>show-cause directive, or otherwise take action</del> and require the institution to demonstrate compliance <u>with the next year’s CAR submission</u>. <del>the time frames described in Title II, Chapter 3. These</del> <u>This</u> time frames may be extended at the sole discretion of the Council for good cause, including evidence that there has been significant improvement in the deficient area(s) and the applicable time frame does not provide sufficient time to demonstrate full compliance, e.g., improvement in retention, placement, or licensure pass rates.</p>	4/9/2015
2-3-200 Accreditation Deferred	<p>When <u>Council determines</u> an institution is measured against the criteria and is found to be <del>in</del> marginal compliance, or there is insufficient evidence available for the Council to make a decision, <del>ACICS may they may</del> defer action until a later date pending receipt of additional information. In such cases, <del>ACICS</del> <u>the Council</u> will provide in writing the reasons for the deferral, state what the institution needs to provide, <u>provide sufficient time for the institution to respond</u> and <del>invite a response to the findings by a specific</del> <u>the response date</u>. <u>Based on the nature and/or number of identified deficiencies, the Council may require attendance of key administrators at a workshop and/or consultation.</u></p> <p>Deferral is, in effect, “no action at this time” and is not a negative action. Therefore, deferral is not an appealable action. Neither is a deferral a final action. In all cases of deferral on reevaluation of accredited institutions, the Council will extend the present grant of accreditation for a period sufficient for the institution to provide the information needed, including time for procedural due process following the Council’s review of the information not to exceed twelve months, if the longest program is less than one year in length; eighteen months, if the longest program is at least one year, but less than two years in length; and two years, if the longest program is at least two years in length.</p>	4/9/2015
Bylaws  ARTICLE IV Elections, Terms, Vacancies, Removal, Resignations, and Compensation	<p>Term of service as a commissioner shall be five years. A person elected or appointed to fill a term of less than two and one-half years is entitled to apply for nomination and election or appointment to a full term. Upon completion of a commissioner’s term, the commissioner shall not be eligible to serve another <u>full</u> term through election or appointment until three (3) years have elapsed. <u>However, a commissioner appointment to complete a vacated term, in full or part, is not subject to the three-year (3) waiting period.</u> <del>However, a</del> <u>A</u> commissioner who is elected to the Office of Chair-Elect in the final year of that commissioner’s term shall have that term extended for one year to allow service as the Chair of the Council to be fulfilled. If nominated, public representatives may serve one additional appointment without the three-year waiting period.</p>	4/9/2015

Section	Criteria Revision	Date Modified
3-1-500 – EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES	<p><u>The major index of an institution’s quality is the effectiveness of its educational program. The educational program must be consistent with the stated mission, be adequate in breadth and context to achieve it, and produce measurable results. Its educational activities, whether residential or otherwise and whether group or individually oriented, shall include definable instruction, interaction, and evaluation. A second index of institutional quality is the resources available to instructors and students.</u></p> <p><u>The third index of an institution’s quality is the competence of its faculty. The effectiveness of any institution depends upon contemporary teaching strategies and practices and upon the knowledge, ability, and commitment of its faculty. The selection, orientation, guidance, stimulation, and evaluation of the teaching staff are among the most significant responsibilities of the administration. The faculty should actively participate in developing the total educational program of the institution.</u></p>	1/1/2015
3-1-501. Faculty Involvement in Academic Governance.	<p><u>The faculty shall have a clear responsibility, distinct from that of developing institutional policy, to participate in administering and implementing policy, especially as it pertains to academic affairs. The institution shall adopt and publish a policy on the responsibility and authority of faculty in matters of academic governance. At a minimum, the policy should address the role of faculty in:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) the development of the educational program of the institution;</li> <li>(b) the selection of course materials, instructional equipment and other educational resources;</li> <li>(c) systematic evaluation and revision of the curriculum;</li> <li>(d) assessment of student learning outcomes; and</li> <li>(e) planning for institutional effectiveness.</li> </ul>	1/1/2015
3-1-503. Specialized/ Programmatically Accredited Programs.	<p><u>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:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) which programs hold specialized or programmatic accreditation;</li> <li>(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</li> <li>(c) any other requirements that are generally required for employment.</li> </ul> <p><u>The institution shall assess the curriculum and/or the need for specialized accreditation and update it as needed to reflect current requirements for employment.</u></p>	1/1/2015
3-1-504. Education or Study Abroad Activities	<p><u>An institution may enter into formal education or study abroad relationships with eligible institutions outside its home country in accordance with the requirements outlined in Appendix J.</u></p>	1/1/2015
3-1-505. Direct Assessment Competency-based Programs.	<p><u>Competency-based programs utilize direct assessment of student learning by faculty and other experts in the field serving under the supervision of the institution for academic progression in lieu of clock or credit hours. The institution must demonstrate that it has utilized a robust and structured process for identifying the required knowledge, skills and professional behavior (“soft skills”) to be considered “competent” in the field. The syllabus for each course must clearly define the competency standards and how the direct assessment of student learning will be conducted</u></p>	1/1/2015

Section	Criteria Revision	Date Modified
<u>APPENDIX J: Principles and Guidelines for Program Enhancement Education or Study Abroad Activities</u>	<p><u>International demands for post-secondary education provide opportunities for member institutions to expand the geographic footprint of their education delivery infrastructure, through on-line, on-ground and combinations of those and other modalities. Regardless of the education delivery infrastructure utilized at an international location, the institution is expected to operate in compliance with ACICS standards as demonstrated through direct monitoring of administrative operations, instruction, student services and the comparable full array of processes that apply to all institutions accredited by ACICS.</u></p> <p><u>The standards and guidelines below will be applied to institutions that offer education or study abroad activities at international locations under the ACICS grant of accreditation. They are designed to apply Council expectations for effectiveness and integrity to programs that primarily lead to employment in professional, technical and occupational fields, regardless of the geographic location of the education or study abroad activity, or the modality with which the education is delivered. Council acknowledges education or study abroad may serve to enhance the interpersonal and developmental aspects of the student, including an improved ability to relate to and work with people from different cultures and ethnic, linguistic and national backgrounds. Council also acknowledges that education or study abroad, as part of a comprehensive career education program, may be directly applicable to the workplace and contribute to a graduate's success in finding placement in an organization with a multinational employee profile that utilizes multinational vendors and suppliers. Finally, the Council authorizes the utilization of education or study abroad, under the parameters prescribed in this section, in recognition that structured education or study abroad may enhance the graduate's ability to compete for job placement with international employers.</u></p>	1/1/2015
<u>APPENDIX J: Principles and Guidelines for Program Enhancement Education or Study Abroad Activities</u>  Continued	<p><u>A key principle of ACICS standards regarding education or study abroad is that the accredited institution must demonstrate that the quality of the education derived from locations outside of a student's home country is comparable to that received at its domestic accredited locations. The burden of proof lies with the institution, regardless of the form of education or study abroad.</u></p> <p><u>1. Education or Study Abroad Activities: For all education or study abroad activities, other than those performed through a formal partnership agreement with an international institution, a U.S.-based institution is required to host a comprehensive Forum review and provide the final determination letter demonstrating substantial conformity with the Forum's standards, contained in the document, "Standards for Good Practice of Education Abroad (SGPEA)", published by the Forum on Education Abroad (<a href="http://www.forumea.org/standards-standards.cfm">http://www.forumea.org/standards-standards.cfm</a>); the requirements for maximum length of study as defined in #2 (below); and the academic residency requirement as described in #3 (below). For those education or study abroad activities performed through a formal partnership agreement, the IPA requirements apply. (Section 2-2-510; Appendix I) International institutions accredited by ACICS located outside the U.S. that are planning to initiate education or study abroad activities must disclose the nature and scope of such activities in writing to ACICS and seek prior approval.</u></p> <p><u>2. Maximum of Length of Education or Study Abroad Activity: No more than 50 percent of a program's coursework may be completed through education or study abroad activities, including transfer credit, challenge examinations and other sources. An education or study abroad program may not exceed an equivalent of two semesters in length.</u></p> <p><u>3. Academic Residency: Students admitted to an education or study abroad program are those who must have satisfactorily completed a minimum of one full-time equivalent semester or quarter or trimester, on-line or on-site through the home institution. Additionally, education or study abroad students are required to complete a minimum one full-time equivalent semester or quarter or trimester on-line or on-site through the home institution following completion of the education or study abroad activity and prior to completion of the credential.</u></p>	1/1/2015

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GLOSSARY Campus Addition- <u>Learning Site</u>	A location of a main campus or branch campus which is under the direct control of the on-site administration of that campus but at a site that is apart from the primary location of that campus. (See Sections 1-3-103 and 2-2-104(b)) <u>A location learning site is a classroom extension of a main campus or additional location branch campus that is within reasonable and commutable distance from the managing location, and is apart from the managing location and is capable of providing sufficient academic and administrative oversight, providing access to all student services and instructional resources and maintaining academic quality. Learning sites used for delivery of distance education activity or collaborative arrangements with other entities for specific on-site educational activity must be approved by the Council on a case by case basis and are subject to a quality assurance visit as specified by the Council.</u>	1/1/2015
1-3-103. Campus Ad- dition <u>Learning Site.</u>	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. <u>A location learning site is a classroom extension of a main campus or additional location branch campus that is within reasonable and commutable distance from the managing location, and is apart from the managing location and is capable of providing sufficient academic and administrative oversight, providing access to all student services and instructional resources and maintaining academic quality. Learning sites used for delivery of distance education activity or collaborative arrangements with other entities for specific on-site educational activity must be approved by the Council on a case by case basis and are subject to a quality assurance visit as specified by the Council.</u>	1/1/2015
<b>Glossary:</b> <b>Competency-based Program:</b> <i>See also Direct Assessment Competency-based Programs</i>	<u>A competency-based program clearly defines the skills, knowledge and professional behavior (“soft skills”) that are required for a student or a graduate to perform at a level considered to be “competent” by practitioners and employers in the field. It focuses on direct, not indirect, assessment methods to measure student learning in lieu of in-class seat time, credit hours or clock hours. It utilizes robust curriculum development process and comprehensively specifies how qualified faculty and/or other eligible experts in the field would directly assess the achievement of required competencies and student learning.</u>	1/1/2015
<b>Glossary:</b> <b>Direct Assessment Competency-based Program.</b>	<p><u>A program that clearly defines the skills, knowledge and professional behavior (“soft skills”) that are required of a student or a graduate to perform at a level considered to be “competent” by practitioners and employers in the field. Only “direct” assessment of student learning and competencies are acceptable. Direct assessment measures must apply to the entire program as well as to each course required for the program. Examples of “direct assessment” measures are as follows: acceptable scores on industry-recognized licensure or certification examinations; standardized tests; pre- and post-tests; examinations and quizzes; research projects; case study analysis; criterion-based rating scale or rubric scores; course-embedded questions; observation of clinical experience, internships, or field work; and capstone projects, theses, exhibits or performances. (For a federal definition and for Council standards, see Appendix H, Section 1).</u></p> <p><u>(“Indirect assessment” of student learning, while deemed valuable for institutional program evaluation and enhancement, are not included in the consideration for approval of a competency-based program. Examples of indirect measures are: course evaluations; hours spent in classes or on out-of-class educational activities; graduate or employer satisfaction surveys; graduate placement rates; student retention rates; and student perception surveys.)</u></p>	1/1/2015
2-2-101. <b>List of Substantive Changes.</b>	<p>The following institutional changes will be considered substantive and require Council approval before they can be included in the institution’s scope of accreditation:</p> <p>...(l) <u>The proposed addition of a direct assessment competency-based program as described in Standards 2-2-111, 3-1-505, and Appendix H, Section 1.</u></p>	1/1/2015

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<u>2-2-111. Addition of a Direct Assessment Competency-based Program.</u>	<u>2-2-111. Addition of a Direct Assessment Competency-based Program.</u> It is the responsibility of the institution to submit the required application for Council review and approval. The initial Council approval allows the institution to apply for submission of an application for approval of that competency-based program to the United States Department of Education for Title IV Federal student financial aid. See also Standard 3-1-505 and Appendix H, Section 1.	1/1/2015
Title III, Chapter 1 General Standards	<p data-bbox="407 359 1349 443"><b>3-1-500 – EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES</b></p> <p data-bbox="407 422 1349 443">...</p> <p data-bbox="407 464 1349 632"><u>3-1-505. Direct Assessment Competency-based Programs. Competency-based programs utilize direct assessment of student learning by faculty and other experts in the field serving under the supervision of the institution for academic progression in lieu of clock or credit hours. The institution must demonstrate that it has utilized a robust and structured process for identifying the required knowledge, skills and professional behavior (“soft skills”) to be considered “competent” in the field.</u></p> <p data-bbox="407 653 1349 716"><u>The syllabus for each course must clearly define the competency standards and how the direct assessment of student learning will be conducted.</u></p> <p data-bbox="407 737 1349 800"><u>The institution must demonstrate to the Council its methodology for determining the equivalent number of credits hours or clock hours required for the program.</u></p> <p data-bbox="407 821 1349 884"><u>The institution is required to maintain, as part of the permanent academic record, student work submitted for direct assessment along with the institution’s assessment of student achievement.</u></p> <p data-bbox="407 905 1349 961"><u>Specific standards and requirements are described in Appendix H Principles and Requirements for Nontraditional Education, Section 1.</u></p>	1/1/2015
APPENDIX C- Institutional Publications Requirements	<p data-bbox="407 1052 1349 1094">....</p> <p data-bbox="407 1104 1349 1125"><u>At a minimum, the catalog must contain the following items:</u></p> <p data-bbox="407 1157 1349 1178">....</p> <p data-bbox="407 1209 1349 1262"><u>23. If the institution is approved by the Council to offer direct assessment competency-based program(s), the catalog must include the following information:</u></p> <p data-bbox="407 1293 1349 1314"><u>(a) a clear identification and listing of direct assessment competency-based program(s);</u></p> <p data-bbox="407 1346 1349 1451"><u>(b) a concise and clear description of how such programs are structured and administered; any special admissions requirements; how students will be expected to demonstrate achievement of competency goals; the types of academic and student services offered to assist students to pass the assessments; and how student achievements will be shown on the academic transcript;</u></p> <p data-bbox="407 1482 1349 1535"><u>(c) disclosure of the number of equivalent credit hours or clock hours and the general methodology the institution uses to determine the equivalencies;</u></p> <p data-bbox="407 1566 1349 1619"><u>(d) a clear description of how financial aid will be administered and disbursed for eligible students enrolled in such programs;</u></p> <p data-bbox="407 1650 1349 1703"><u>(e) disclosure of other entities or qualified individuals, in addition to the institution’s faculty, engaged in the direct assessment process; and</u></p> <p data-bbox="407 1734 1349 1780"><u>(f) disclosure of the consequences or options available to students if they fail to demonstrate achievement of competency goals within a prescribed period of time.</u></p>	1/1/2015



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Appendix D - Standards of Satisfactory Progress	<p>....</p> <p>_____ 17. If the institution is approved to offer direct assessment competency-based program(s), the institution must demonstrate that it has implemented appropriate policies that describe how it will measure whether a student enrolled in a competency-based program is making satisfactory academic progress. Policies and procedures must be implemented to identify in a timely manner when a student enrolled in such a program has withdrawn or changed enrollment status. The institution must maintain for Council review evidence that financial aid officers and others assigned to monitor satisfactory academic progress have been trained and are adequately monitored for implementing policies affecting competency-based programs.</p>	1/1/2015
APPENDIX H Principles and Requirements for Nontraditional Education	<p><b><u>SECTION I</u></b>  <b><u>DIRECT ASSESSMENT COMPETENCY-BASED PROGRAMS</u></b></p> <p><u>Programs that are designed to prepare students for a specific profession or career are especially suited to be offered as direct assessment competency-based programs because such programs focus on what the students need to know, understand, or be able to do. The process utilized for the development of the curriculum, expected competencies, ways to directly assess such competencies and equate them to credit hours or clock hours (as required by the United States Department of Education as well as by the Council) demands active involvement of employers, as appropriate, and other experts in the discipline. Potential benefits gained by such programs are as follows:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Allow students to progress at their own pace, but in compliance with the institution's satisfactory academic progress policy;</u></li> <li>• <u>Allow flexibility to motivated students;</u></li> <li>• <u>May potentially shorten the time for completion of the program;</u></li> <li>• <u>May potentially reduce overall cost of education; and</u></li> <li>• <u>May foster creativity for the institution, faculty and students in exploring cost-effective pathways to complete a program.</u></li> </ul> <p><b><u>Federal Definition of Direct Assessment Competency-based Programs</u></b></p> <p><u>A direct assessment program is an instructional program that, in lieu of credit hours or clock hours as a measure of student learning, utilizes direct assessment of student learning, or recognizes the direct assessment of student learning by others. The assessment must be consistent with the accreditation of the institution or program utilizing the results of the assessment.</u></p> <p><u>Direct assessment of student learning means a measure by the institution of what a student knows and can do in terms of the body of knowledge making up the educational program. These measures provide evidence that a student has command of a specific subject, content area, or skill or that the student demonstrates a specific quality such as creativity, analysis or synthesis associated with the subject matter of the program. Examples of direct measures include projects, papers, examinations, presentations, performances, and portfolios.</u></p> <p><b><u>ACICS Glossary of Definitions</u></b></p> <p><u>Using the Federal definition as a guide, the Council has developed expanded definitions for Competency-based Programs and Direct Assessment Competency-based Programs. A longer list of examples of "direct" assessment measures is given in the Glossary. "Indirect" assessment measures, while deemed valuable for assessing institutional and program effectiveness, are not included in the consideration for the approval of competency-based programs.</u></p> <p><u>For consideration of eligibility to participate in Title IV Federal Student Aid Programs, the Department of Education will consider only direct assessment competency-based programs.</u></p>	1/1/2015

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<p>APPENDIX H Principles and Requirements for Nontraditional Education</p>	<p><b><u>Process for Review, Approval and Quality Monitoring Visits</u></b></p> <p><u>Proposed initiation of a direct assessment competency-based program is classified as a substantive change and requires Council review and approval.</u></p>	<p>1/1/2015</p>
<p><b><u>SECTION 1 DIRECT ASSESSMENT COMPETENCY-BASED PROGRAMS</u></b></p>	<p><u>Institutions must submit Part I of the Application for Direct Assessment Competency-based Program, along with required supporting documents, for a preliminary review and Council action. A separate application is required for each program. The guidance document and instructions accompanying Part I of the application are designed to guide the institutions in gaining an idea of the types of direct assessment methods that are strongly recommended for professional and career-focused programs. The principles and requirements included in this Appendix will be applied in reviewing the application.</u></p> <p><u>In considering the application, the Council will determine if the institution has demonstrated that it has used a rigorous process to identify what the student or graduate must know and be able to do to be considered “competent” by employers and experts in the field or discipline. In addition, the institution has demonstrated that it has developed robust direct assessment techniques and has explicitly described how it determines the equivalent number of credit or clock hours for the program.</u></p> <p><u>Upon approval of Part I of the application by the Council, the institution will apply to the U. S. Department of Education for Title IV approval of the proposed direct assessment competency-based program.</u></p> <p><u>Part II of the Application for Direct Assessment Competency-based Programs must be submitted to ACICS at least three months prior to the effective start date of the program. The approval letter will provide instructions on at least two quality monitoring on-site visits to the institution—the first visit will be conducted within six months of start of the program and a second follow-up visit will be conducted between 12 to 18 months of start of the program, depending upon the credential level of the program.</u></p>	
	<p><b><u>Institutional Mission and Institutional Readiness</u></b></p> <p><u>(a) The basis for the introduction of direct assessment competency-based programs must support the mission and objectives of the institution.</u></p> <p><u>(b) The structure and objectives of the program must clearly demonstrate that a systematic process was utilized in identifying and defining specific competencies related to the program. The process shall include participation of representation from employers, experts in the field, faculty, alumni and faculty.</u></p> <p><u>(c) The Campus Effectiveness Report must include a discussion of the proposed direct assessment competency-based programs—the rationale, overall structure, anticipated direct assessment methods engaged, plans for assessment and continuous improvement of the program, and adoption of best practices in competency-based education.</u></p>	
	<p><b><u>Admissions Requirements and Enrollment</u></b></p> <p><u>Eligibility requirements for admission to direct assessment competency-based programs must be clearly defined, published and consistently applied. The institution is expected to develop objective mechanisms and standards for determining the potential characteristics of students who are best suited to pursue and complete the program.</u></p>	
	<p><b><u>Curriculum Development and Direct Assessment Measures</u></b></p> <p><u>(a) In the development of the curriculum, institutions must organize each course to enable students to clearly understand measurable learning objectives. Whenever possible, the Council encourages institutions to utilize standardized tests and industry-recognized licensure or certification examinations as direct assessment of student learning. Multiple direct assessment methods, which are student-centered, must be utilized where appropriate.</u></p>	

Section	Criteria Revision	Date Modified
<p>APPENDIX H</p> <p>Principles and Requirements for Nontraditional Education</p>	<p><u>(b) The syllabus for each course must be expanded to include clear learning objectives, student competency expectations, direct assessment techniques utilized by the faculty, criterion-based rating scales or rubric scores where appropriate, and the institution's systematic methods for determining credit hour or clock hour equivalencies. The syllabus must also clearly state how the student's progress will be monitored and how the final grades will be recorded.</u></p>	1/1/2015
<p>SECTION 1 DIRECT ASSESSMENT COMPETENCY-BASED PROGRAMS</p>	<p><b><u>Faculty and Instructional Support</u></b></p> <p><u>Maximum support of the program faculty is essential to develop and implement this student-centered program. The institution must demonstrate that the faculty members are provided proper training, in-service and professional development activities to support this program. A rationale for faculty-student ratios must be developed. Adequate technology support must be provided as appropriate for faculty to monitor student progress and competency achievements.</u></p> <p><b><u>Student Support Services</u></b></p> <p><u>(a) The institution must demonstrate that it offers strong student support services to assist students in achieving their competency goals. Mentors and student counselors must be trained to provide suitable support.</u></p> <p><u>(b) The institution must have a definite pathway for competency-based program students who may be advised to transition to a traditional fixed-schedule, teacher-directed format.</u></p> <p><u>(c) Academic advisors, registrars, career counselors, and financial aid counselors must be provided special training to provide support to the direct assessment competency-based program students.</u></p> <p><b><u>Utilization of External Entities and Experts</u></b></p> <p><u>(a) If appropriate, the institution may utilize external entities and experts in providing a portion of the direct assessment competency-based program. The scope and nature of their involvement must be clearly outlined in a formal contract. The institution must demonstrate that it has sufficient academic control for the development and monitoring of the program. The contract must be approved by the Council prior to implementation.</u></p> <p><u>(b) If external entities and experts are utilized, the institution's faculty must provide more than 50 percent of the direct assessments of the competency-based program.</u></p> <p><b><u>Continuous Program Assessment and Improvement</u></b></p> <p><u>The institution must have adequate plans for the continuous assessment of the effectiveness of the program and provide for continuous improvement. These plans must be described in the Campus Effectiveness Plan.</u></p> <p><b><u>Publications</u></b></p> <p><u>Full and accurate disclosure of an approved direct assessment competency-based program must be provided in the institution's catalog and Web site. The catalog disclosure must follow the requirements as described and outlined in Appendix C, Item 23.</u></p>	

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<b>Glossary: Introduction.</b>	The following definitions are provided in order to assist institutions in understanding and interpreting the Accreditation Criteria. The definitions include some of the most commonly used terms and are defined to reflect their most common usage. These <u>normative definitions are drawn from a variety of sources no single source and meant to be exemplary rather than limiting, are offered by way of example rather than limitation.</u> The Council recognizes the evolving and dynamic nature of post-secondary education in the U.S. and Internationally. <u>American postsecondary education: While it</u> It has no intention of imposing rigid expectations,. wWhen an institution departs from these norms it may be called upon to defend the academic integrity of the questioned activity.	9/1/2014
<b>Glossary: Credit Hour.</b>	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 outside preparation, two hours of laboratory experience, or three hours of <u>externship internship or practicum</u> , 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.	9/1/2014
<b>Glossary: Degree, Associate.</b>	The academic credential granted upon successful completion of an educational program of <u>at least generally two but less than four years of full-time equivalent academic years of college-level work, including a minimum number of credits as specified under Section 3-4-202.</u>	9/1/2014
<b>Glossary: Degree, Baccalaureate.</b>	The academic credential granted upon successful completion of an educational program of <u>at least four years of full-time equivalent academic years of college-level work, including a minimum number of credits as specified under Section 3-5-202.</u>	9/1/2014
<b>Glossary: Externship.</b>	See Practicum: <u>A supervised practical experience that is the application of previously studied theory. Normally, three hours of work in a practical setting has the credit equivalency of one hour of classroom lecture. Under the supervision of a faculty or staff member, a written agreement shall be developed that outlines the arrangement between the institution and the externship site, including specific learning objectives, course requirements, and evaluation criteria.</u>	9/1/2014
<b>Glossary: General Education</b>	Humanities—Courses in fields such as literature, philosophy, logic, foreign language, art, music, <u>theater</u> appreciation, and communications, including rhetoric, composition, and speech; but excluding business communications; <u>and business writing spelling, letter writing, and word study.</u>	9/1/2014
<b>Glossary: Internship</b>	See <u>Externship Practicum</u>	9/1/2014
<b>Glossary: Practicum</b>	See <u>Externship</u> . A supervised practical experience that is the application of previously studied theory. Normally, three hours of work in a practical setting has the credit equivalency of one hour of classroom lecture. Under the supervision of a faculty or staff member, a written agreement shall be developed that outlines the arrangement between the institution and the practicum site, including specific learning objectives, course requirements, and evaluation criteria.	9/1/2014

















