

TO: ACICS-Accredited Institutions and Other Interested Parties
FROM: Accrediting Council for Independent Colleges and Schools
DATE: October 8, 2010
SUBJECT: Update on Proposed Criteria

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I. PROPOSED CRITERIA REVISIONS

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

Explanation of Proposed Changes

In the March and May 2010 Memoranda to the Field, the Council proposed to introduce into the Accreditation Criteria a new type of institution, to be called the distributed enterprise. The proposal is to introduce the distributed enterprise as a new classification of institution in Chapter 3 of Title I, General Policies; explain how an institution qualifying as a distributed enterprise would gain and maintain accreditation in Title II, General Procedures; and ensure the consistent use of terms in Title III, Evaluation Standards.

The new classification of institutions would also require a revision of the definition of campuses, retaining the definition of a main campus and replacing the current designations of branch campus and learning site with a single classification, to be called an "additional location." ACICS will continue to accredit single campus institutions and multiple campus institutions that do not qualify as a "distributed enterprise," or that do not seek that designation. While maintaining the full rigor of all existing ACICS standards, these modifications will enable ACICS to improve the effectiveness with which distributed enterprise institutions are reviewed, evaluated and accredited by adopting procedures based on US Department of Education (USDE) regulations that go into effect in July 2010.

The consequence of classification as a distributed enterprise is that evaluation of the institution would be focused upon the central administrative system through which educational activities are controlled. The quality of the institution would be verified by adding to the accreditation process a new level of review of the institution as a whole, by adding a new source of review through the institution's own compliance monitoring process, and by basing campus-level review on visits to at least 50% of campuses or to all of the campuses, depending upon the circumstances. These new procedures are more closely aligned with the organizational structure of the distributed enterprise, and will increase the effectiveness of the evaluation process while allowing for consolidation of applications and reports, thereby eliminating redundancy and duplication of effort.

Changes and additions in the September 2010 Memorandum to the Field to the previously proposed changes in the Accreditation Criteria included (1) setting the minimum number of campuses for evaluation team visits at 50% and specifying the factors on the basis of which additional campuses might be selected for visits and (2) retaining in Section 2-2-102 an initial resource visit to all new additional locations and campus additions.

The change in this Update to the September 2010 Memorandum to the Field was inadvertently omitted from the previous document. The intention of the Council is to accommodate a change to the original purpose of Section 2-2-202, which was to reassign one or two campuses. The purpose of the proposed revision to this section is to recognize the possibility that a multiple campus institution may wish to consolidate several main campuses and all their affiliated additional locations by reassigning all but one of those main campuses as an additional location of the remaining main campus. The scope of this type of consolidation requires a more elaborate procedure to realign numerous campuses and their grant expiration dates.

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

A. DISTRIBUTED ENTERPRISE

2-2-202. Reassignment Classification and Consolidation of Campuses. Institutions seeking to reassign the classification of a campus or campuses or to consolidate groups of campuses must submit a written request that includes the rationale to the Council. The Council will consider the institution's requested grant expiration date for the newly formed group of campuses and assign modified or full-team evaluation visits as necessary to bring the grant lengths of the various groups of campuses into alignment. The scope and timing of these visits will be based on the length of the grant of accreditation for each group being reassigned or consolidated, as well as a review of determining factors such as retention and placement rates, reporting status, complaints and adverse and any other pertinent information. No campus will be given an extension of its current grant longer than one year for purposes of the consolidation, and new campuses moving through the additional location inclusion process will be visited as part of that process, regardless of the consolidation proposal.

~~If the grant expiration date of a reassigned branch campus additional location and their new main campus are different, the campus' new expiration date will be the earlier of the grant lengths. However, †~~The Council reserves the right to assign an on-site evaluation visit at either the main ~~or branch~~ campus or additional locations at any time as it deems necessary.
