

TO: ACICS-Accredited Institutions and Other Interested Parties  
FROM: Accrediting Council for Independent Colleges and Schools  
DATE: December 27, 2011  
SUBJECT: Final Criteria, Proposed Criteria and Other Information

<b><u>TABLE OF CONTENTS</u></b>	<b><u>PAGE</u></b>
<b>I. FINAL CRITERIA REVISIONS</b>	<b>2-7</b>
<i>Effective Immediately</i>	
A. Satisfactory Academic Progress	2
B. Program-Level Standards for Student Achievement	5
C. Enrollment Agreements	6
D. Admissions, Education Requirements and Transfer of Credit Policy for Doctoral Programs	7
<b>II. PROPOSED CRITERIA REVISIONS</b>	<b>8-12</b>
A. Federal Credit Hour Definition	8
B. Show-Cause Directive	12
<b>III. FOR INFORMATION ONLY</b>	<b>12-17</b>
A. Cohort Default Rates	12
B. ACICS Web Site	13
C. Workshops	13
D. Public Comment	14
E. Public Participation	14
F. SPECIAL ACICS AWARE Webinars	14
G. Campus-Level and Program Level Standards	15
<b>IV. COMMENT FORM – PROPOSED CRITERIA REVISIONS</b> (Please respond by Friday, February 3, 2012)	<b>18</b>

## **I. FINAL CRITERIA REVISIONS – *EFFECTIVE IMMEDIATELY***

At its December 2011 meeting, the Council reviewed specific areas of the ACICS *Accreditation Criteria* outlined in Section I. The language contained in Section I was previously reviewed by ACICS constituents or reflects a clarification of previously approved criteria.

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

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

### **A. SATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS**

#### *Reasons for Changes*

*The USDE Program Integrity regulations that went into effect July 1, 2011, included a modification to the procedures that institutions may use to place students who are not making satisfactory academic progress (SAP), into either a new status, called Financial Aid Warning, or into an existing but modified status, called Financial Aid Probation. The changes to the Criteria outlined below will bring ACICS requirements for SAP into alignment with the new USDE regulations.*

#### **Appendix D, Standards of Satisfactory Progress**

...

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. The policy must contain all of the elements required by the Council and federal regulations. The Council expects institutions to publish those standards for students enrolled in the institution's educational program(s). The Council also expects institutions to monitor whether a student meets the minimum qualitative and quantitative components of the standards.

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.

Each of these requirements must be strictly observed:

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 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 may allow a student to have a probation period for a specified period of time. The institution should state whether the student will remain eligible for federal financial aid during the probation period.~~

~~9.10.~~ 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. 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.

~~11.~~ 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 a specified period of probation and will be considered making satisfactory academic progress during that period, and the student's eligibility for financial aid will be reinstated. A student on probation may receive federal financial aid funds for one payment period. 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. 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.

If a student is not making satisfactory academic progress, the institution may place the student in an extended enrollment status. A student placed in an extended enrollment status is not eligible for federal financial aid. 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.

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, or its equivalent upon graduation from all programs.

## **B. PROGRAM-LEVEL STANDARDS FOR STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT**

### *Reasons for Changes*

*Although as an institutional accreditor, ACICS has for many years had specific, well-defined campus-level standards for student achievement, USDE requires that in order to be officially recognized, ACICS must immediately add program-level standards including standards for licensure pass rates, clearly distinguish the threshold below which an institution is out of compliance with these standards, and include an evaluation of all programs against these student achievement measures in a detailed written report provided to the institution.*

*The Council approved the changes below to existing sections of the Criteria to reflect these requirements, to specify the measures involved, and to describe the respective uses of the Campus Accountability Report (CAR) and the Campus Effectiveness Plan (CEP).*

**2-1-808. ~~Interim 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 may 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, or if the Council may will issue a show-cause directive to an institution due to the financial operation of the institution, or otherwise take negative action and require the institution to demonstrate compliance within the time frames described in Title II, Chapter 3. Institutions that are required to prepare 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 ~~nonmain campuses~~-additional locations and campus additions.

**2-1-809. ~~Retention and Placement.~~ Student Achievement Review.** 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, registration or certification pass rates, if applicable. When this review indicates that the achievement of an institution's students is weak or deteriorating, 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 no longer complies with the Council's requirement for student achievement, the Council will 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. Institutions that are required to include a plan of student achievement improvement within their CEPs or that are determined to be out of compliance with the Council's standards for student achievement are considered to be on student achievement review and those with campus- or institution-level plans are subject to additional requirements. ACICS will determine average retention and placement rates annually for each main and additional location of every accredited institution based on information collected in the Annual Accountability Reports and will provide these data to all accredited institutions. An institution with a campus that has retention or placement rates that are not in keeping with the expectations of ACICS may require consultation between ACICS and the institution, the submission of a corrective action plan, undergo an on site evaluation, or be issued a show cause directive, or a deferral or denial action related to the institution's application for a new or initial grant of accreditation, or directed another appropriate action.

**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, ~~if:~~ based upon these rates.

~~(a) its most recent cohort default rate is 20% or greater; or~~

~~(b) its default rate improvement plan failed to minimize student loan defaults adequately for those cohort years for which the plan was in effect.~~

## C. ENROLLMENT AGREEMENTS

### *Reasons for Changes*

*The Council gave final approval to add language requiring the signature of the student and school representative on enrollment agreements.*

**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.

~~**3-1-432(c). Tuition and Charges.** The enrollment agreement or catalog used by an institution must clearly outline the financial obligations of both the institution and the student. When an enrollment agreement is used, the student must receive a copy.~~

## **D. ADMISSIONS, EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS AND TRANSFER OF CREDIT POLICY FOR DOCTORAL PROGRAMS**

### *Reasons for Changes*

*The Council gave final approval to modify the standards for Doctoral Degree programs to clarify the relationship between admission requirements and transfer of credit, in the case where a master's degree is required for admission.*

**3-7-403. Education Requirements.** The number of credits required for the doctorate 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, 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.

**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 prerequisite 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. ~~Transfer of credit for appropriate master's or doctorate level course work from another institution may be granted according to the policy established by the institution.~~ Academic credit shall not be awarded for experiential learning activity.

\*\*\*\*

## II. PROPOSED CRITERIA REVISIONS

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

### A. FEDERAL CREDIT HOUR DEFINITION

#### *Explanation of Proposed Changes*

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. The purpose of this review is to evaluate the reliability and accuracy of the institution's assignment of credit for these purposes, and this evaluation is distinct from the review of credit assignment for academics purposes, as outlined in Section 3-1-516. Therefore, the Council has proposed the addition in a new Section 2-2-503 of a description of the federal definitions which the institution must reference in its policies and procedures and which the institution must apply to the out-of-class assignments on its course syllabi. The definition of credit hours in 2-2-503(a) applies to credit hour courses and programs, while the definition of conversion formulas in 2-2-503 (b) applies to undergraduate degree programs of less than two years in length and non-degree programs that are not fully transferrable to degree programs and which are not required by the USDE to be defined as clock hour programs.

These definitions were effective July 1, 2011. However, the USDE has granted institutions and their accreditors one year to come into compliance as long as they make a good faith effort. ACICS plans to develop and inform institutions about the review process during Winter 2012 and implement the process during Spring 2012.

#### 2-2-500 – PROGRAMS OF STUDY

**2-2-501. Initiation and Evaluation of New Programs.** The Council must be notified prior to the start of all new programs. All new programs and modes of delivery must be initiated within one year of the planned start date. A new program must be approved by the Council before an institution or campus advertises, recruits, or enrolls students in the proposed program. The institution or campus must submit a program outline, course descriptions, an explanation of the mode of educational delivery, and supporting data. Additional information must be submitted on Council forms. The submission of an Annual Institutional Report or catalog identifying a new program does not constitute appropriate notification to the Council. Any campus required to submit a campus retention or placement improvement plan to the Institutional Effectiveness Committee must obtain prior permission from ACICS for the initiation of any new program. Any

institution on interim reporting to the Financial Review Committee may be required to obtain prior permission from ACICS for the initiation of any new program. Any institution under a show-cause directive, a negative action, or in a probation status must obtain prior approval to apply for a new program. Any of the following changes to an existing program creates a new program:

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

(b) a change in academic measurement from clock hours to credit hours or vice versa, or a change from quarter to semester credit hours or vice versa; or

(c) any additions or deletions of courses offered that may change the overall objective of a currently approved program.

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

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

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

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

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

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

***2-2-502. Initiation and Evaluation of New Programs at Higher Credential Levels than Previously Offered.*** An institution that intends to offer its first new program at a higher credential than it previously has awarded must submit additional materials and undergo evaluation beyond those procedures outlined in Section **2-2-501** above. In addition to the New Program Application, the institution must submit a detailed transition plan describing how it is or intends to come into compliance with the requirements for this new credential as described in the applicable chapter of **Title III** of the *Accreditation Criteria*.

The New Program Application and transition plan will be reviewed by the Council. Any institution required to report placement and/or retention data to the Institutional Effectiveness Committee or financial reports to the Financial Review Committee must obtain prior permission from the Council for the initiation of its first new program at a higher credential. If the application and plan are determined to be complete, an institution will be granted approval to advertise, recruit, and enroll for the program(s) and an evaluation visit will be scheduled within six months of the initial start date of the program. The purpose of the evaluation visit will be to assess the institution's initial compliance with the Accreditation Criteria for the higher credential program, and the appropriate composition of the team will be determined by the Council.

The application and transition plan, the site visit report, and the institution's response to the report will be reviewed by the Council at its next regularly scheduled meeting. If the Council determines that the transition plan is appropriate and that the institution is sufficiently prepared to offer the new credential, it will grant the institution initial inclusion for the new program. The Council will provide the institution in the initial inclusion notice with a timetable for the submission of periodic progress reports and for a follow-up site visit once the program has a sufficient enrollment and/or a sufficient number of graduates.

Final inclusion of the new program will be granted by the Council only after the follow-up visit has been conducted. The institution may request that the follow-up visit take place earlier than scheduled by the Council if it has a sufficient number of graduates who have earned the new credential. The Council retains the right to determine when the follow-up visit will occur.

Subsequent new programs at the new credential level will be evaluated by the Council using the new program procedures described in Section **2-2-501** above.

An institution may not submit an application for a new program at a higher credential when approval of final inclusion of a program at a lower credential level is pending.

**2-2-503. Evaluation of Programs for Purposes of Awarding 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 in 34 CFR 600.2 and in 34 CFR 668.8(k) and (l), to courses and programs and will determine whether this assignment conforms to commonly accepted practice in higher education. This evaluation is distinct from the review of credit assignment for academics purposes as outlined in *Section 3-1-516*

- a) **Credit Hours for Credit Hour Programs.** The evaluation of credit hour programs, as defined in 34 CFR 688.8(k)(1), for purposes of financial aid is based on the following federal definition of a credit hour:

Except as provided in 34 CFR 668.8(k) and (l), 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 34 CFR 688.8(k)(2) 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 at least a total number of clock hours of instruction. The evaluation of these clock-to-credit hour programs is based upon the following federal conversion formula:

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; &
- (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.

## **B. SHOW-CAUSE DIRECTIVE**

### *Explanation of Proposed Changes*

*The Council proposes to add language to clarify that such a directive, while not in itself a negative action, is predicated upon the determination by the Council that a campus is no longer in compliance with its standards and therefore must come into compliance within the established timeframes.*

**2-3-403. Show-Cause Directive.** When the accreditation of an institution is subject to suspension action (other than summary suspension under Section 2-2-301) because the Council 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 and will be invited to “show cause” why its accreditation should not be suspended or otherwise conditioned. 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 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 as described in section 2-3-600. Following receipt of a show-cause directive, the institution must bring itself into compliance within the timeframes specified in Title II, Chapter 3, or the institution will be subject to final adverse action.

\*\*\*\*\*

## **III. FOR INFORMATION ONLY**

### **A. COHORT DEFAULT RATES**

As a result of the most recent reauthorization of the Higher Education Opportunity Act 2008, changes were made to the time frames used to calculate institutions’ cohort default rates (CDR). In the past, the U.S. Department of Education has used a two-year time frame in its calculation. However, under the new provisions an institution’s CDR is calculated as the percentage of the borrowers in the cohort who default before the end of the second fiscal year following the fiscal year in which the borrowers entered repayment. This represents a one year extension of the current default monitoring period. The FY 2009 cohort (borrowers who entered repayment between October 1, 2008 and September 30, 2009) will be the first CDR calculation using the new standard. Thus, an institution’s FY 2009 three-year CDR will be the percentage of its borrowers who were included in the 2009 cohort who subsequently default on or before September 30, 2011. Draft rates will be provided to institutions in February of 2012 with official rates released

in September of 2012. For more information, visit the U.S. Department of Education’s Web site at [www.FSADataCenter.ed.gov](http://www.FSADataCenter.ed.gov).

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

**B. ACICS WEB SITE**

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

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

**C. 2012 WORKSHOP SCHEDULE**

<b>Workshop/Webinar</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Location</b>
Evaluator Webinar	January 27, 2012	On-Line
Retention and Placement Workshop	February 10, 2012	ACICS Office
Retention and Placement Workshop	February 24, 2012	ACICS Office
Initial Accreditation Workshop	February 29, 2012	ACICS Office
Accreditation Workshop	March 1, 2012	ACICS Office
Accreditation Workshop	March 2, 2012	ACICS Office
Evaluator Webinar	March 30, 2012	On-Line
Accreditation Workshop	May 2, 2012	Murfreesburg, Tennessee
Accreditation Workshop	May 17, 2012	Phoenix, Arizona
AWARE Webinar	May 18, 2012	On-Line

Evaluator Webinar	May 25, 2012	On-Line
Accreditation Workshop	June 5, 2012	Coeur d' Alene, Idaho
Accreditation Workshop	June 19, 2012	Las Vegas, Nevada
Initial Accreditation Workshop	June 19, 2012	Las Vegas, Nevada
Distance Education Workshop	June 19, 2012	Las Vegas, Nevada
Accreditation Workshop	July 24, 2012	Aventura, Florida
Evaluator Webinar	July 27, 2012	On-Line
Accreditation Workshop	August 22, 2012	ACICS Office
CEP/CAR Workshop	August 23, 2012	ACICS Office
Accreditation Workshop	August 24, 2012	ACICS Office
AWARE Webinar	September 14, 2012	On-Line
Accreditation Workshop	September 20, 2012	ACICS Office
Accreditation Workshop	September 21, 2012	ACICS Office
Evaluator Webinar	September 28, 2012	On-Line
Accreditation Workshop	October 9, 2012	Dallas, Texas
Initial Accreditation Workshop	October 9, 2012	Pasadena, California
Accreditation Workshop	October 18, 2012	Kansas, Missouri

#### D. PUBLIC COMMENT

The Council encourages institutions to provide feedback regarding Council operations and procedures. Comments on the proposed *Criteria* revisions are due by **Monday, February 3, 2012**. All other materials for review during the April 2012 Council Meeting should be submitted by **Friday, March 16, 2012**.

#### E. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

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

#### F. SPECIAL ACICS AWARE WEBINARS

The AWARE webinar will be held on Friday, January 13, 2012. Because of the implications of two of the topics for faculty, students and employers, as well as administrators and evaluators, the webinar will be divided into two sessions, one focusing on **New Program-Level Standards** and the other focusing on the **New Homework Requirements**. **Institutions are urged to inform all faculty, students, graduates and employers (including the members of all Program Advisory Committees) about these two sessions.** If there are any topics of interest in addition to those in this memorandum that you would like to be addressed during the webinar, please send an email to Ms. Terron Sales at [tsales@acics.org](mailto:tsales@acics.org).

**G. CAMPUS-LEVEL AND PROGRAM-LEVEL STANDARDS**

The Council approved the changes described below in the existing, current campus-level student achievement standards and the proposed, new program-level student achievement standards. These changes are based upon statistical information derived from the 2011 Campus Accountability Report (CAR). The statistics for retention rates are: Average Rate = 72%, Standard Deviation = 10 and the statistics for placement rates are Average Rate = 70%, Standard Deviation = 12. These standards will be reviewed by the Council each year in light of updated statistical information from the latest CAR. Program-level standards have been established on the basis of same averages and standard deviations as the campus-level standards in order that they complement the campus-level standards for student outcomes of all programs and function as a floor below which no individual program may fall. The program-level standards have been applied to programs that have a minimum enrollment of 10 students and a minimum of 10 completers/graduates.

<p>ACICS will begin implementation of the program improvement planning requirement for all program-level standards in 2012. The new campus-level standards and other program-level compliance standards will be applied in 2013 to data collected in the 2012 CAR.</p>	<p><b><i>STATISTICAL METHOD<sup>1</sup></i></b></p>	<p><b>RETENTION RATES<sup>2</sup></b></p>	<p><b>PLACEMENT RATES<sup>3</sup></b></p>	<p><b>LICENSURE PASS RATES<sup>4</sup></b></p>
--	---	---	---	--

<b>CAMPUS -LEVEL<sup>5</sup></b>				
• <b>Improvement</b>	<i>Average minus ½ SD</i>	<b>67%</b>	<b>64%</b>	NA
• <b>Monitoring</b>	<i>Average minus 1 SD</i>	<b>62%</b>	<b>58%</b>	NA
• <b>Compliance</b>	<i>Average minus 2 SD</i>	<b>52%</b>	<b>47%</b>	NA
<b>PROGRAM-LEVEL<sup>6</sup></b>				
• <b>Improvement</b>	<i>Average minus 1 SD</i>	<b>62%</b>	<b>58%</b>	<b>60%</b>
• <b>Compliance</b>	<i>Average minus 2 SD</i>	<b>52%</b>	<b>47%</b>	<b>40%</b>

1. **METHOD** – Based upon 2011 CAR Reports. To be reviewed each year based on annual CAR reports.
2. **RETENTION** –The Campus-level Improvement Standard represents an increase of 7 percentage points over the current standard of 60%. New program-level standards represent a modification of previously proposed standards (a decrease of 3% points from previously proposed improvement standards of 65% and an increase of 3% points from 55% proposal for the compliance standard).
3. **PLACEMENT** – The Campus-level Improvement Standard represents a decrease of 1 point from the current standard of 65%. New program-level standards represent a change from previous proposal (an increase of 2 % points from 56% improvement and an increase of 7% points from 40% proposal for the compliance standard).
4. **LICENSURE PASS** – Currently ACICS has no standards for licensure pass rates. The new Licensure Pass Rates standards are 60/40%. These standards are based upon the average – 1 or – 2 standard deviations for the majority of fields, although some fields have lower statistics. 40% would not override a pass rate standard for compliance set by the respective state or national licensing agency.
5. **CAMPUS-LEVEL REQUIREMENTS** – Campus-level **Improvement** = required improvement plan in CEP; **Monitoring** = in addition a required workshop or consultation; **Compliance** = show cause & clock starts on established timeframe to come into compliance or be subject to final adverse action. **Campus-Level student achievement review** requires prior approval (via a waiver request) for new programs or campuses.
6. **PROGRAM-LEVEL REQUIREMENTS** – Program-Level **Improvement** = required improvement plan in CEP; **Compliance** = receives notice of sanction and timeframe, tracking &, if necessary, program approval is withdrawn and teach out plan is required. **Program-level student achievement review** does not require prior approval (via a waiver request) for new programs or campuses.
7. **IMPLEMENTATION (of each level and phase)**
  - Current campus-level standards will be implemented in 2012. New campus-level standards in 2013.

- New program-level improvement standards (improvement plan in CEP) implemented in 2012
- New program-level compliance standards (timeframe for compliance or show cause/special visit) implemented in 2013

NOTE: The Council is invites comments and suggestions on how these standards might best be applied to on-line programs and courses.

\*\*\*\*

**IV. COMMENT FORM – PROPOSED CRITERIA REVISIONS**

ACICS ID Code: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of  
Organization: \_\_\_\_\_

Address : \_\_\_\_\_

***Please check (as appropriate):***

Proposed *Accreditation Criteria* revisions:

- Federal Credit Hour Definition  
 Accept as Written     Modify (please explain)
  
- Show-Cause Directive  
 Accept as Written     Modify (please explain)

Other topics:

Suggestions on how best to apply program-level standards for Student Achievement to on-line courses and programs:

---

---

---

---

Prepared by: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

**Please respond by Friday, February 3, 2012 to:**

Ms. Terron Sales  
Manager of Policy & Institutional Review  
Accrediting Council for Independent Colleges and Schools  
750 First Street, NE, Suite 980  
Washington, DC 20002-4241  
Fax (202) 842-2593  
[fieldcomments@acics.org](mailto:fieldcomments@acics.org)

