

Criteria Changes – December 2011

A number of regulatory changes at the U.S. Department of Education (USDE) and ACICS have taken place in the past few months. The *Memo-to-the-Field* is the channel via which such changes are communicated to the institutions and evaluators. All evaluators are encouraged to review the document, participate in the AWARE Webinars, and ask questions of staff to ensure understanding of these changes.

Final Criteria

A. Standards of Satisfactory Progress

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

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.

12. ...When an institution grants a student's appeal for mitigating circumstances, the student will be placed on probation 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.

B. Enrollment Agreements

ACICS now requires institutions to utilize enrollment agreements. The following language has been added to the Criteria:

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.

Section 3-1-432(c). Tuition and Charges. has now been deleted from the Criteria.

C. Transfer of Credit for Doctoral Degrees

The Council deemed that a clarification in language was necessary to clarify the relationship between admissions criteria and transfer of credit, in the case where a master's degree is required for admission.

3-7-403. Education Requirements. ...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.

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...

D. Program-Level Standards

To comply with the USDE, 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.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3

Message from the (Temporary) Evaluator Manager

I hope the holiday season went well for all and that we're all ready for the often blustery Winter Cycle.

There is a new, but familiar, individual penning these words this cycle. Ian Harazduk, Senior Accreditation Coordinator, is handling newsletter responsibilities as well as evaluator questions and concerns for the Winter Cycle. If you have not heard, Ms. Perliter Walters-Gilliam recently had twin boys and is on maternity leave for the cycle. With that said, there will be no change to ACICS Evaluator

Management—other than addressing questions to Ian at iharazduk@acics.org or (202) 336-6795 until Perliter's return.

We have an interesting and exciting newsletter packed with important policy and procedural changes, new coordinators to introduce, and another fascinating installment of our 'Stories from the Road' column.

Stay safe, stay warm, and enjoy this cycle.



Administrative/Academic Roles

An update is necessary regarding the “administrative,” “academic,” and “neither” roles assigned to each evaluator. As noted in an earlier issue, ACICS, in order to comply with the DOE, must have at least one evaluator that is “administrative” and one evaluator that is “academic” on each of its full-team visits.

The definitions, once again, are:

“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;

“Neither” is defined as persons that do not fit the role of academic or administrative as defined above.

ACICS has enhanced its database and now has the ability to vet each evaluator for one of the three categories. Therefore, with this enhancement, we will no longer be connecting the academic or administrative roles with Student Relations or Educational Activities. Instead, it will be the responsibility of each ACICS travel coordinator, along with managerial oversight, to appropriately fill full-teams.

How this affects you? We have used evaluator responses to our previous request to determine academic or administrative classification. The roles of Student Relations and Educational Activities will be vetted based on whether evaluators have appropriate experience to conduct these roles and no longer dependent on their academic or administrative classification. If you have any questions regarding this procedure, please feel free to contact evaluatormanager@acics.org or Ian Harazduk at iharazduk@acics.org.

New Travel Coordinators

“Working for ACICS as a non-travel program coordinator for almost two years, I am more than eager to take on the task of a ‘travel warrior.’ I look forward to working directly with our member institutions, as well as learning more about the accreditation process for the betterment and advancement of members institutions. I’m sure this new role will be a little challenging in the beginning, but I’m ready and willing to drive full force into this new journey.”



Erica Boothe
Program Coordinator



Chad Hartman
Accreditation Coordinator

“I always enjoy going to new places and meeting new people. Throughout my career I have had the opportunity to work in many areas of the field of education. I am excited to take this next step with ACICS and participate in the accreditation process.”

“I have worked in higher education for quite some time, specifically with youth preparing for college. Therefore, I have witnessed the good, the bad, and the ugly of education. With this position I’m excited to have the opportunity to effect change and ensure that pupils are receiving the quality education they deserve. Students take out thousands of dollars in loans to pay for their education (I am one of them) and they deserve to reap the benefits of efficient and effective education. I am honored to be working for a company that makes that possible.”



Melonie Vanderpool-Wyatt
Accreditation Coordinator

Evaluator Recruitment

We are asking evaluators to reach out to colleagues in their professional associations, organizations, and networks to encourage participation in the ACICS evaluator process. Share our email address, evaluatormanager@acics.org and we will gladly follow up. We have an urgent need in the following areas:

Anesthesia Technology
Computer/Electronics Engineering Technology
Computer Drafting and Design
Construction Management
Construction Technology/Specialty In Solar Power
Digital Video/Audio Production
Electrical Engineering Technology
Electronics/Communications Engineering Technology
Game Design/Software Applications & Programming
Graphic Design
Heat and Air Conditioning Technician
Hemodialysis Technician
Information Systems Security
Internet Marketing
Mobile Communications Technology
Network Systems Administration
Project Management
Visual Communications

If you are not currently approved to evaluate any of the above areas but believe you have the required academic and experiential qualifications, please forward an updated resume with a note to evaluatormanager@acics.org for additional review. If you know of professionals in the above fields who would be interested in serving ACICS as a volunteer evaluator, please encourage them to apply by visiting <http://www.acics.org/evaluators>.

Additionally, if you have contacts at professional associations and organizations who would be invaluable resources with access to experts, please introduce them to ACICS and send us an email for follow up.

ACICS wishes to thank those evaluators who are already engaged in the recruitment process or provide referrals of individuals who could add value to the program.

Program-Level Standards

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

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).

Final Criteria

2-1-809. 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.

Procedures

The changes noted below 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 the 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 (retention, placement, and licensure pass rates) have been applied to programs that have a minimum enrollment of 10 students and a minimum of 10 completers/graduates.

PROGRAM- LEVEL		Ret.	Pla.	Lic.
• Improvement	<i>Average minus 1 SD</i>	62%	58%	60%
• Compliance	<i>Average minus 2 SD</i>	52%	47%	40%

How this affects you (for the Winter Travel Cycle):

Campus-level changes will not be implemented until following submittal of the 2012 CAR. However, program-level standards will be implemented for the Winter travel cycle. New questions have been added to Section 9 of the visit template as shown below:

The travel staff have been provided a listing of all applicable programs that are currently below the threshold of 62% for retention; 58% for placement; and 60% for licensure pass rates. As indicated on the updated report templates it is the responsibility of each program specialist to ac-

9.01 Is licensure, certification or registration required to practice in the specific career field?
 Yes No

If *Yes*, describe how the program provides students with the necessary skills to obtain licensure, certification or other registration necessary to practice in the specific occupational or professional area.

(a) Is there a federal or state licensing agency established pass rate for this program?
 Yes No

(b) If *Yes*, what is the minimum pass rate set by the federal or state licensing entity?
 _____ %.
Add additional qualifiers if necessary:

(c) What are this program's pass rates for the past three years?
 Year: _____ Pass Rate: _____ Not Available
 Year: _____ Pass Rate: _____ Not Available
 Year: _____ Pass Rate: _____ Not Available

(d) Do the current year's program pass rates meet the minimum pass rate set by the Council standard of 60%?
 Yes No Not Applicable

If *No*, does the Campus Effectiveness Plan (CEP) include an improvement plan for this program with data, analysis and activities to meet or exceed Council requirements?
 Yes No

9.06 Does the program meet the needs of its students and the requirements of the Council, as shown by student achievement outcomes which meet or exceed the standards for the following areas:
 (a) Student retention rate of 62%?
 Yes No Not Applicable (new branch only)

(b) Student placement rate of 58%?
 Yes No Not Applicable (new branch only)

If *No* for either item or if the data is not available, does the Campus Effectiveness Plan (CEP) include data, analysis and activities to meet or exceed the relevant standard?
 Yes No Not Applicable (new branch only)

curately answer the necessary questions. The Program Improvement Plans have three required elements:

Data – Data on the relevant metric(s) from the 2011 CAR, plus any relevant information on graduate and employer satisfaction with the program or learning outcomes of program graduates, as required in the CEP, or other information the institution finds useful.

Analysis – A narrative description, based upon a review of the data and information and the results of any activities carried out previously to raise the relevant rate, of the reasons why the institution believes this rate has fallen below the ACICS standard for program planning.

Activities – A narrative description of activities that have been undertaken and results to date, plus activities that are planned in order to raise the relevant rate. The program specialists may also request to see documentation that planned activities from past years, if described in the plan, have been implemented.

If the campus does not have a program improvement plan for any programs that fall below the outlined standards, or the plan does not have the three required components, they should be given a citation (Sections 2-1-809, 3-1-512 and 3-1-111).

All campuses with programs that do not meet these standards have been notified of Student Achievement Planning Review and its implementation. If you have any questions, please ask your travel staff coordinator.

Stories from the Road—Irony Edition

The Evaluator is pleased to once again share stories from the road.

Can You Spare Some Change?

By Jocelyn Harris

After driving from Indianapolis to Chicago, I reached my first unmanned toll booth which required 35 cents for entry into the city. Upon reaching for my wallet I noticed that the only change I had was three dimes and a euro from Paris. After attempting to trick the machine into thinking the foreign currency was a nickel, I began shaking and digging in my purse. The end result? No nickel. No nothing. As I noticed a trail of cars backed up behind me, I knew the only logical step was to get out of my idling vehicle and ask the driver behind me if I could have a nickel in exchange for a dollar (the machine only took coins). Exasperated by this request, the gracious driver took pity on me and simply gave me the nickel. I thanked her profusely and returned to my vehicle. I threw the coin into the machine, rode off into the

sunset, only to remember that I had a full change purse on the inside zipper of my handbag.

Twins

By Bizzy Fain

We were in Grand Rapids, Michigan; the sun was still shining even after our pre-visit meeting and dinner. A small group of us decided to venture out from the hotel and take an easy-going stroll across the Grand River before the organized franticness of the next day's event commenced. As we stepped onto the footbridge crossing the river, we mentioned interesting facts about ourselves. An evaluator from the twin cities noted that he was in fact a twin—and called on his wife and Facebook to confirm it to the disbelieving group. Then, as if Eiron himself was present, we noticed on the other side a pair of twins walking with twin bulldogs. They were each carrying skateboards, so of course we had to ask. The twins placed the skateboards on the ground and each



bulldog stepped on and rolled down the bridge with their identical owner. They waved and rolled on. Not even Danny DeVito and Arnold Schwarzenegger could top that.

Articles and stories in this newsletter rely on submissions from staff and evaluators. If you wish, please share one of your “stories from the road” or article of interest with our Evaluator Management Team for possible inclusion in the next newsletter. Please send any submissions to pwgilliam@acics.org

Report Templates - January 2012

New report templates for the full team report (Additional Location Inclusion, Initial Grant, and New Grant), that reflect the new changes in the *Accreditation Criteria* and the addition of appropriate questions, have been uploaded to the Report Templates page on the ACICS Web site. Evaluators are responsible for downloading this version prior to each team visit to ensure that the current report is being used for the evaluation. The revised reports can be found on the ACICS Web site at <http://www.acics.org/evaluators/content.aspx?id=2438>.

Chair Training Attendees

ACICS acknowledges the following new chairs that attended ACICS Chair Training at our office in Washington, D.C. on November 18, 2011. Thank you all for taking on this vital role in the accreditation process.

Lisa Bynoe

John Mago

William McPherson

For those interested in becoming a chair, please review the qualifications and the application process which can be found on the [ACICS Web site](#).

Evaluator Training Workshop Participants

ACICS acknowledges the following new evaluators. These individuals attended an Evaluator Training Workshop since our last issue. Thank you.

Higuaniona Almonte

Tracy Cagan

Kimberley Carter

William Cohen

Donna Cosby

Candace Croft

Robert DeFinis

Katheryn Fox

Eric Grosse

Gene Haynes

Kalebra Henderson

Erin Henry

Betty Herard

Ray Janes

Deborah Jones

Rebecca Jones

Rita Kendall

Ebony King

Carlton Lawrence

Andrea Martin-Montella

Barbara Mayer

Thai Nguyen

David Pearce

John Persico

Sherry Phelan

Carmen Pough Banks

Gabriel Ramos

Peggy Rapai

Brenda Rockward

Manuel Rosa

Kevin Sanderson

Eileen Schiffer

Kathryn Sheets

Richard Smolenski

Matt Stiehm

Erin Taylor

Susan Wolff

Bonnie Wright

The Evaluator staff thanks all those who provide editorial and contextual feedback. I would like to pay special thanks to those who have contributed articles for this issue. The Evaluator is managed by Perliter Walters-Gilliam. Any questions or concerns about the publication may be directed to pwgilliam@acics.org.