EVALUATION
PROCEDURES AND GUIDELINES

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AND SCHOOLS

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This publication is designed to prepare evaluators for their vital role in the accreditation process. Please review it carefully and contact the ACICS staff member coordinating the visit if you have any questions.

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CANONS OF ETHICAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR ACICS EVALUATORS

The continued existence and acceptance of privately administered accreditation presumes the recognition that the aggregate of the system is based upon the singular integrity of all those individuals charged with the adoption of policies, procedures, and standards and with the evaluation and measurement of institutional performance. A member of an evaluation team plays a vital role in the maintenance and preservation of the system. Therefore, the fulfillment of this role requires an understanding by evaluators of their relationship with and function in the accreditation process.

In fulfilling accreditation responsibilities, an evaluator encounters a variety of issues and situations that require the exercise of fair and impartial judgment. Although the specifics of these issues and situations cannot be foreseen with particularity, fundamental ethical principles are available for guidance. Within the framework of such ethical principles, these Canons of Ethical Responsibility are set forth:

1. An evaluator shall uphold the integrity of the accreditation process.

2. An evaluator shall avoid impropriety and the appearance of impropriety in all activities.

3. An evaluator shall perform all specific duties impartially and diligently.

4. An evaluator shall refrain from any business activity inappropriate to accreditation responsibilities, including the offering of any materials or information pertinent to the institution's operation or services.

5. An evaluator shall decline to serve on any evaluation team that is responsible for evaluating any institution or branch of any institution with which he or she has been, is currently, or presently intends to be directly or indirectly involved.

6. An evaluator shall preserve the confidentiality of the institutional information to which he or she is privy.

7. An evaluator shall, in representing ACICS, subscribe to the ACICS policy on Discrimination and Harassment in his or her dealings and interaction with the ACICS staff, other members of evaluation teams, or any person affiliated with an institution being evaluated. An evaluator is obligated to report to the ACICS Executive Director any action that he or she perceives to be discrimination or harassment. (The ACICS Policy on Discrimination and Harassment is disclosed on the following page.)

In the final analysis, it is the desire for the respect and confidence of peers and of the educational institutions served that should provide an evaluator with the incentive for the highest possible degree of ethical conduct. The possible loss of that respect and confidence is the ultimate sanction.

ACICS POLICY ON DISCRIMINATION AND HARASSMENT

A) ACICS does not condone sexual harassment, which includes the promise or threat, explicit or implicit, that an employee's job status will be affected favorably or unfavorably unless the employee agrees to demands of a sexual nature; unwelcome physical contact or verbal comments; or other activities that create a hostile environment in the workplace. If you believe that you have been subject to sexual harassment, you should report the incident according to the complaint procedures outlined below. No retaliatory action will be taken against any employee who files a complaint.

B) ACICS is committed to providing a work environment that is free of discrimination and harassment. Actions, words, jokes, pictures, or comments that are based on an individual's sex, race, ethnicity, age, religion, or any other legally protected characteristic or that are obscene will not be tolerated. Sexual harassment, whether overt or subtle, is a form of misconduct that is demeaning to another person, undermines the integrity of the employment relationship, and is strictly prohibited.

C) Any employee who wants to report an incident of sexual or other harassment should report the matter to his or her supervisor promptly. If the supervisor is unavailable, or if the employee believes that it would be inappropriate to report the matter to the supervisor, the employee should contact the Executive Director immediately. Employees can raise concerns and make reports without fear of reprisal.

D) Any employee who becomes aware of possible sexual or other harassment of another employee should advise the Executive Director promptly. The Executive Director will handle the matter in a timely and confidential manner.

E) The Executive Director or his designee will investigate the complaint promptly. The investigation will include interviews with persons identified by the complainant as having direct knowledge of the harassment. The alleged harasser also will be interviewed. After a thorough investigation, the Executive Director will prepare a written determination regarding the allegations, and copies of the determination will be provided to the complainant and the alleged harasser. Either party may appeal either the decision or the disciplinary action or both to the Executive Director, who will have the final authority.

F) Any individual found to have engaged in harassment is subject to disciplinary action, including discharge where appropriate.

CHAIR RESPONSIBILITIES

The chair and the ACICS staff representative (“staff”) shall organize and conduct a meeting of the team (see Previsit Team Meeting) prior to the visit to review the self-study and Update Report, the purpose of the visit, the role of each team member, the role of the staff, and the assignment of responsibilities during the visit. It is recommended that a brief meeting between the chair and staff be held prior to the full team meeting.

The chair and the staff shall maintain regular communication with the institution’s chief on-site administrator throughout the evaluation process regarding any areas of concern or potential findings of noncompliance. As appropriate, the chair and staff shall give the institution’s chief on-site administrator the opportunity to respond to the areas discussed. Further, the institution’s chief on-site administrator is to be informed of all areas of noncompliance prior to the exit conference.

The chair should ensure that the evaluation team conducts its review of the institution in compliance with Council policy that all sections of the team report have been completed, and that information is reported in a detailed and accurate manner. The chair and staff should check with team members periodically to ensure that the visit is progressing on schedule. The chair is responsible for conducting the exit conference and preparing the final report according to the ACICS team report guidelines.

TEAM MEMBER RESPONSIBILITIES

Team members: Team members work independently on the sections assigned to them but are encouraged to request assistance as needed from the chair and the ACICS staff representative (“staff”). When each team member has gathered the necessary information, a draft of the evaluation report is written. The report should be detailed and accurate, with all general statements supported by specific evidence. The report is to be thorough, covering all aspects of the institution's operations and including strengths and areas in which the institution does not meet Council standards. All sections of the report will be read and discussed by all members of the team prior to departure.

Subject specialist: Each program offered by an institution must be evaluated by a subject specialist. Ordinarily, one person will be chosen to evaluate each new program being offered by the institution. The evaluator will be accompanied by staff that will coordinate the visit and assist the team member as described above. The report will be read and discussed by the team prior to departure. If the visit is not conducted in conjunction with a full team visit, the subject specialist is responsible for conducting the exit conference and preparing the final report using the appropriate report outline (Distance Education, New Program, Readiness, and/or Credential Inclusion). During a reevaluation visit, a subject specialist(s) will be invited to serve on the team for each specialized program.

ACICS Staff Representative (“staff”): During the visit, the primary role of the staff is to interpret the ACICS *Accreditation Criteria*. Staff will provide team members with guidance in understanding and applying the *Criteria* and may assist team members with gathering information as time provides. Staff is not to be assigned sole responsibility for the writing of any section of the team report with the exception of the publications section. Staff also will ensure that all areas of the institution’s operation are properly reviewed by the team members.

In addition, staff will provide institutional representatives with guidance in understanding the Council’s accreditation standards. As stated above, staff and the team chair shall maintain regular communication with the institution’s chief on-site administrator throughout the evaluation process regarding any areas of concern or potential findings of noncompliance. As appropriate, the chair and staff shall give the institution’s chief on-site administrator an opportunity to address these areas prior to the exit conference. Further, the institution’s chief on-site administrator is to be informed of all areas of noncompliance prior to the exit conference.

PREVISIT TEAM MEETING

The following topics are to be covered by the team chair and/or the ACICS staff representative:

1. Introductions of all team members and academic/experiential background.

2. Purpose of the visit and review of institution's application, Update Report, and history.

3. Materials sent to team members, including follow-up evaluation forms.

4. Evaluator expense and reimbursement procedures.

5. The "Canons of Ethical Responsibility" and proper conduct during the visit.

6. Evaluation visit time schedule.

7. Format for report writing and team report writing assignments.

8. Format and structure of the opening session with institution's director including any questions to be asked during that session.

9. Format and structure of the exit session.

REPORT WRITING GUIDELINES

1. The questions contained in this publication are to be used by each team member in preparing the draft version of the report. The final narrative report prepared by the chair will not identify each question number.

2. All narrative questions must be answered in complete sentences. Please see the published *Writing Guidelines* for details. Single-sentence paragraphs should be avoided.

3. At no time should evaluators write their recommendations or suggestions in the body of the report. The recommendations section at the end of the report should be used for these comments.

4. Areas of noncompliance must be referenced with a section number from the *Accreditation Criteria*. If an area of concern does not relate to a specific criteria section, it may not be an area of noncompliance and should be discussed with the ACICS staff representative. Strengths of the institution should be incorporated into the overall report.

5. Areas of noncompliance on the summary page should be written in the negative, using language from the *Accreditation Criteria*. The explanation of the areas of noncompliance should be explained in the body of the report, not on the summary page. For example:

   <u>*Summary page of report*</u>

   3-1-303(e) The grading system is not correctly explained on the student transcript and in the catalog (page 6).

   <u>*Body of the report*</u>

   (Section 3-1-303 (e)): The grading scale in the catalog is different from the grading scale on the student's transcript. In the catalog, A = 90-100, but on the transcript, A = 95-100

USE OF COMPUTERS ON VISITS

Report sections are to be typed while the team is onsite. It is recommended, and highly preferred, that evaluators bring their personal laptops to ensure efficiency during the review. Additionally, team members should consider the following:

1. Do not become overly focused on entering information into the computer and thereby neglect your responsibility outside the team room. When students, staff, and faculty are onsite, team members should be interviewing, observing, and collecting information needed to complete the written report.

2. The chair is responsible for the final report, including formatting and editing all sections that team members have entered into the computer. During the visit, time should be spent creating complete sentences and making sure all necessary information is included.

3. Team members are <u>required</u> to type their portion of the report, using Microsoft Word, and the chair is responsible for preparing the final report following the visit.

FINAL REPORT

The chair is responsible for preparing the final evaluation report for submission to the Council office. The report should reflect the unanimous opinion of the team, with the chair assuming final authority over content.

The chair will edit the draft of the team report and submit the final copy to the Council office for additional editing. A copy of the report is then forwarded to the institution for its written response. Team chairs must prepare and submit team reports to visitreports@acics.org with a copy to the staff representative of that visit. Team chairs should be aware of the potential for the sharing of computer viruses and take appropriate precautions to avoid the spread of such viruses through their computer system. Team reports are to be submitted within 5 days business days of the conclusion of the site visit.

Each area of noncompliance listed on the summary page should include the page number in the report where the detailed explanation can be found. In addition, the explanation of an area of noncompliance in the body of the report should contain the *Criteria* number in bold and in parenthesis at the beginning of the explanation. This method of cross-referencing enables everyone who reviews the report (institution, commissioners, staff) to locate information easily. Page number references should be added after the final report has been prepared to ensure accuracy.

It is imperative that the chair review the report in its entirety before submission to the Council office. The chair should review the report carefully for typographical and grammatical errors and consistency in report format. Staff members are not responsible for these activities and compliance with Council team report guidelines.

After preparing the team report and submitting it to the Council office, retain copies for your files. ACICS will provide a disk upon request to assist teams with acceptable formatting and style.

TRAVEL AND HOTEL ARRANGEMENTS

Team members are responsible for making their own transportation arrangements. Team members are asked not to schedule return transportation that would require them to leave the institution's premises before 5:00 p.m. on the last day of the visit unless advised otherwise. Rental cars should not be secured by individual team members unless approved in advance by the ACICS staff representative. Normally, hotel reservations will be made by the staff representative, but payment is the responsibility of each team member. For convenience, all team members will stay at the same hotel. The staff representative will notify each team member of the name and address of the hotel. Changes made to hotel reservations by team members may create a rate change. Any rate increases due to change made by team members will be the responsibility of the team members.

REIMBURSEMENT INFORMATION

Team members will be reimbursed for all appropriate expenses, including travel, lodging, meals, and other expenses supported by original receipts. A "Request for Travel Reimbursement" form is available on the ACICS Web site. Requests for reimbursement must be submitted within 60 days of the evaluation visit; requests submitted after that date will not be honored. Expense reimbursements for team chairs will be made after receipt of the completed team report. **Receipts should not be paper-clipped or stapled to the reimbursement form but should be taped to a full-sheet of paper to ensure that they are not lost during the reimbursement process at the Council office.**

An honorarium of $350 per actual visit day is paid to the chair of the evaluation team and an honorarium of $250 per actual visit day is paid to all evaluators.

An evening school visit, when coupled with a one- or two-day visit, does not qualify an evaluator for an additional day's honorarium. Honoraria are based on the number of full days scheduled for the visit. Each honorarium covers travel time, time on the premises, and time involved in preparing the formal report to the Council.

The honoraria will be paid by the Council upon completion of the visit and receipt of expense reports and receipts for expenses incurred. All requests for reimbursement are to be completed electronically using the Concur system and sent to the Council office in Washington, D.C., with original receipts and report. The Reimbursement Guidelines should be reviewed and adhered to in its entirety.

Evaluators are protected from individual lawsuits through the Council professional liability insurance coverage. The Council also provides travel/accident insurance for evaluators.

TYPES OF EVALUATION VISITS

Initial and Reevaluation
An initial evaluation visit is the first full opportunity for the Council to receive information about an institution interested in accreditation. Many initial applicants will have a small number of students with financial support coming primarily from community agencies and contracts with business and industry. An institution undergoing an initial evaluation visit usually does not have the authority to participate in federal financial aid programs. Some initial applicants may be currently accredited by another agency.

Reevaluation visits are required for continued accreditation. Self-study materials are sent to institutions seeking to renew their accreditation in the spring of the year prior to the year of expiration of the current grant of accreditation. The maximum grant of accreditation is eight years.

Additional Location Inclusion
When an institution initiates a branch campus, a branch verification visit is conducted by a staff member within the first six months of operation. The Council also requires the report of a full evaluation team approximately twelve to eighteen months after the branch begins operation. These institutions are required to provide a modified version of the self-study to the evaluation team.

New Program
Institutions initiating new programs that include subjects outside the institution's current scope of operation (i.e., a institution with secretarial programs initiating an allied health curriculum) must have such programs reviewed onsite by an appropriate subject specialist. Team members are provided with a copy of the institution's new program application to utilize during the evaluation visit. These visits are usually conducted by one team member who is accompanied by an ACICS staff member and are normally one day in length.

Readiness
Institutions initiating new programs at a higher credential level than previously offered by the institution must submit a transition plan in addition to the new program application. Prior to the initiation of the program, the institution must undergo an evaluation visit to determine the institution's preparedness (or readiness) to begin the program. These visits are usually conducted by one team member who is accompanied by an ACICS staff member and are normally one day in length.

Credential Inclusion
A second visit is conducted when the institution has offered the new program at a higher credential for a period of time sufficient to assess program outcomes before the Council considers final inclusion of the new credential program. These visits are usually conducted by team members, accompanied by an ACICS staff member, and are normally two days in length.

Special
Special visits are conducted when the Council determines that the report of an additional evaluation team is needed in order for a decision to be made regarding the institution's accredited status. These reports address specific areas as identified by the Council and assess the institution's overall compliance with the *Accreditation Criteria*.

Change of Ownership
A one-day visit is conducted within six months following a change of ownership or control at an institution. The purpose of this visit, usually conducted by an ACICS staff member, is to review institutional changes as a result of the change in ownership or control.

Unannounced
Unannounced visits are conducted to address specific areas as identified by the Council and to assess the institution's overall compliance with the *Accreditation Criteria.* These visits are usually conducted by an ACICS staff member and are normally one day in length.

EVALUATION VISIT MEETING ROOM MATERIALS
Initial, Reevaluation, and Additional Location Inclusion Visit

Institutions are requested to place the following materials in the room provided to the evaluation team while at the institution.

1. Current Information

   a. Class schedule including course names, numbers, titles, room numbers, class times, names of instructors, and student enrollment by class period;
   b. Student enrollment on day(s) of visit by program and by day and evening divisions;
   c. Floor plan of facility;
   d. Staff roster and organization chart;
   e. Course syllabi for all courses;
   f. All admissions tests with answer key and test cut-off scores for each program;
   g. If ability-to-benefit students are admitted, complete documentation evidencing the relationship between admissions test cut-off scores and successful academic or employment outcomes, as well as the contract for the independent test administrator;
   h. A copy of the most recently completed Annual Institutional Report and the prior year's ACICS Annual Institutional Report along with the complete back-up documentation. This must include information to support enrollment, graduate, and withdrawal numbers and placement information such as student name, program of study, graduation date, job title, employer name, and employer telephone number;
   i. Institutional Effectiveness Plan;
   j. Board of directors and administrative staff meeting minutes;
   k. Faculty meeting minutes;
   l. Documentation of in-service training sessions held and the schedule for upcoming sessions; and
   m. A copy of the Certificate of Attendance at an ACICS Accreditation Workshop for the chief on-site administrator or self-study coordinator.

2. Official Documents
   a. Corporate Charter
   b. Articles of Incorporation, and Certificate of Incorporation or other appropriate documentation of legal structure and ownership of the institution and a chart outlining the ownership structure
   c. Certificate of good standing; relative to an institution's corporate statute and/or legal identity;
   d. State license and authorization to award degrees (if applicable);
   e. Most recent state and VA compliance reports;
   f. Documentation that the facilities are in compliance with local, state, and federal laws governing fire, safety, and sanitation;
   g. Documentation that the institution is in compliance with copyright laws for instructional materials utilized;
   h. U.S. Department of Education Program Participation Agreement and Eligibility and Certification Approval Report (if applicable);
   i. Reports from most recent reviews by agencies such as the U.S. Department of Education, Inspector General, and guarantee agency, as well as the institution's student financial aid compliance audit; and
   j. Third-party contracts with other educational institutions or contracts such as JTPA.

3. Files
   a. Administrative staff personnel files that include updated ACICS data sheets; and
   b. Faculty personnel files that include updated ACICS data sheets, copies of administrative and student evaluations, and faculty development plans with documentation of their implementation.

4. Inventories
   a. Resource and reference materials; and
   b. Instructional equipment for all programs.

5. Publications

a. Most recent ACICS self-study;

b. All current advertising and promotional literature, including scripts and tapes of radio and television ads;

c. Student, faculty, and staff handbooks (if applicable); and

d. Current catalog with all addenda.

NOTE: Student files will be selected randomly for review by team members.

EVALUATION VISIT MEETING ROOM MATERIALS
New Program and Credential Inclusion Visit

Institutions are requested to place the following materials related to the program of study in the room provided to the evaluation team while at the institution.

1. Current Information
   a. Class schedule including course names, numbers, titles, room numbers, class times, names of instructors, and student enrollment by class period;
   b. Student enrollment on day(s) of visit by program and by day and evening divisions;
   c. Floor plan of facility;
   d. Staff roster and organization chart;
   e. Course syllabi for all courses; and
   f. Documentation that the institution is in compliance with copyright laws for instructional materials utilized;
   g. U.S. Department of Education Program Participation Agreement and Eligibility and Certification Approval Report (if applicable);
   h. Reports from most recent reviews by agencies such as the U.S. Department of Education, Inspector General, and guarantee agency, as well as the institution's student financial aid compliance audit; and
   i. A copy of the most recent Annual Institutional Report and complete back-up documentation. This must include information to support enrollment, graduate, and withdrawal numbers and placement information such as student name, program of study, graduation date, job title, employer name, and employer telephone number;
   j. Institutional Effectiveness Plan;
   k. Board of directors and administrative staff meeting minutes;
   l. Faculty meeting minutes; and
   m. Documentation of in-service training sessions held and the schedule for upcoming sessions.

2. Files
   a. Administrative staff personnel files that include updated ACICS data sheets; and
   b. Faculty personnel files that include updated ACICS data sheets, copies of administrative and student evaluations, and faculty development plans with documentation of their implementation.

   NOTE: Student files will be selected randomly selected for review by the team.

3. Inventories
   a. Resource and reference materials; and
   b. Instructional equipment for all programs.

4. Publications
   a. All current advertising and promotional literature, including scripts and tapes of radio and television ads;
   b. Current catalog with all addenda.

READINESS VISIT
MEETING ROOM MATERIALS

The following materials shall be prepared and placed in the visiting team's room prior to the team's arrival.

1. Current information

   a. List of all currently approved programs.
   b. Staff roster and organization chart.
   c. Syllabi for all courses taught in the proposed new degree program(s)
   d. Application for new program(s) offered at a higher credential.
   e. Transitional Plan.

2. Official documents

   a. State license and/or authorization to award degrees.
   b. Correspondence with state regulatory agencies and accrediting agencies other than ACICS, if any.

3. Files

   a. Administrative staff files.
   b. If applicable, faculty files for any instructors who will be teaching in the new degree program.

4. Inventories

   a. Current library resource and reference materials.
   b. Current instructional equipment.

5. Publications

   a. All current advertising and promotional literature, including radio and television.
   b. All planned advertising for the new program.
   c. Current catalog with all addenda.

A TYPICAL EVALUATION VISIT

Each evaluation visit is different due to the individual circumstances involved. However, the following activities will be a part of each evaluation visit regardless of purpose.

I. Tour Physical Facilities

A. Classrooms (take an approximate student attendance count)
B. Lounges (student, faculty, visitors, etc.)
C. Resource center or library
D. Administrative and academic offices
E. Housing, if applicable

II. Meet with the Campus Administrator

A. Introduce all team members, giving brief summary of professional experience of each
B. Obtain overview of institution's history, mission, and objectives of the programs
C. Obtain analysis of socioeconomic area in which the institution is located
D. Discuss briefly the planned activities of the day including each team member's role
E. Discuss any materials not available in the meeting room

III. Begin Review by Individual Team Members

A. Appropriate staff are interviewed based on areas assigned in the evaluation report
B. All team members should interview students
C. Team members will meet on a periodic basis as directed by the chair to share results of interviews and review of materials

NOTE: The team chair and staff representative will periodically inform the chief on-site administrator of concerns identified by the team. All team members should communicate concerns to the chair as they are discovered. There are to be no areas of non-compliance identified at the exit conference that the institution was not made aware of prior to the exit.

IV. Read Team Report as a Group

A. Discuss and agree on content of report
B. Identify areas of noncompliance with the *Accreditation Criteria*
C. List any recommendations to be included as an addendum to the evaluation report (if applicable)

V. Conduct Exit Conference with Team and Director of Institution

A. Team chair thanks school personnel
B. Team chair summarizes the areas of noncompliance as agreed to by team members
C. Staff representative explains the next steps in the evaluation process

GUIDELINES FOR TEAM ACTIVITIES

This outline is provided for guidance to team members. Please note that not all parts of the outline will be applicable to all institutions. Team members will utilize the sections applicable to their assigned sections of the report.

Sections of the outline are compatible with sections of the self-study and Accreditation Criteria. Team members should always request and review documentation to support all statements.

<u>INTERVIEWS</u>

I. Interview Director of the Institution

A. Mission
1. What is it
2. How is it achieved
3. Describe Institutional Effectiveness Plan and its relationship to the mission

B. Organization, administration, and control
1. Educational and experiential background of director
2. Administrative chain of command
3. Advisory committees or other community input
4. Administrative staff and faculty meetings (how often, topics, etc.)
5. Evaluation of staff and faculty
6. Faculty input into administrative policies
7. In-service training
8. Extracurricular activities
9. Clerical assistance
10. Counseling for students
11. Retention program (if applicable, interview specific staff assigned this function)
12. Other student services
13. Programs of study

II. Interview Students

It is recommended that students from each program be interviewed both individually and as a group.

A. Enrollment information
1. How student heard about this institution
2. Why this institution was chosen
3. What admissions procedures were utilized
4. Was a catalog issued to student and does it accurately portray the institution
5. Were administrative policies explained
6. Was an enrollment agreement signed--if yes, did student receive a copy
7. Was there an orientation program

B. Educational background
1. Is student a high school graduate
2. Has student had other postsecondary education--if so, what were transfer-of-credit policies and procedures when student enrolled in this institution

C. Tuition and financial arrangements
1. Name of program in which student is enrolled, length, and cost
2. How is the tuition paid
3. Awareness of refund policy and terms of policy
4. If the student is receiving financial aid, is the student aware of how the aid is packaged and what the repayment responsibilities are? Does the student know the difference between a grant and a loan? Has the student been counseled about student loan default?

D. Educational program
   1. Program objectives
   2. Program requirements for graduation; does student know when s/he will complete program
   3. Are students familiar with the sequencing and scheduling of courses
   4. Size of largest, smallest, and average class
   5. Preparation of instructors
   6. Are instructors available for additional help
   7. Do students evaluate faculty
   8. Is there ample time for practice on equipment (e.g., computer, medical, electronic) and is it in good working order?
   9. Are textbooks received in a timely manner
   10. Resource center/library
   11. Counseling and guidance
   12. Is there a feeling of freedom to discuss problems (e.g., academic, financial, personal) with administration and faculty
   13. Awareness of school policy regarding academic or attendance problems

E. Extra-Curricular Activities
   1. What does the school offer
   2. Do students actively participate in the activities offered

F. Opinions
   1. School and educational program in general (e.g., best features, recommendations for improvement)
   2. Faculty as a whole
   3. Administration as a whole
   4. If choice were to be made again, would student enroll in this institution
   5. Would student recommend the institution to a friend or relative

III. Interview Admissions Director and Representatives

A. Institution's admission standards
B. Determination of leads and subsequent procedures
C. Procedures for admission (testing, orientation, etc.)
D. Type of student being recruited--recent graduate, adult, veteran, non-high school graduate, contract
E. Control executed over admission representatives
F. Responsibility for advertising (check materials published; for more information, refer to Appendix C of the *Accreditation Criteria*)
G. Evaluation of performance
H. Understanding of chain of command
I. Frequency of staff meetings and topics discussed
J. Testing procedures for ability-to-benefit vs. high school graduates/GED; who administers test
K. Who is responsible for determining test cut-off scores for admission

IV. Interview Financial Aid Director and Officers

A. Describe financial aid programs in which institution participates (Federal and state programs)
B. Describe institutional grant or loan programs
C. Describe any scholarship programs offered by the institution (check to see if all the details are accurately described in the catalog and research past recipients)
D. Ask to see student financial records (e.g., ledger cards) and explanation of accounting methods
E. Percentage of total enrollment receiving financial aid
F. How are standards of satisfactory progress monitored
G. Describe the communication between the education and financial aid departments concerning satisfactory progress
H. Review standards of satisfactory progress as stated in the catalog
I. Explanation of refund policy and procedures (check actual withdrawals to be randomly selected by team member)
J. Describe default management procedures
K. Education/experience of financial aid director

L. Evaluation of performance
M. Involvement in admission process
N. Understanding of chain of command
O. Frequency of staff meetings and topics discussed

V. Interview Placement Director

A. Describe placement activities
1. Review contacts made
2. Number and location of students placed from last graduating class by program (see section on AIR verification)
B. Placement follow-up studies
C. Evaluation of performance
D. Understanding of chain of command
E. Frequency of staff meetings and topics discussed

VI. Interview Faculty
Select at least one faculty member from each department. It is recommended that faculty be interviewed individually.

A. Educational/experiential background
B. Faculty Development Plan
1. How is plan developed
2. How is it implemented
3. How is it documented
4. When is it reviewed
C. Professional organization memberships
1. Amount of participation
2. Does institution contribute towards membership fees?
D. Faculty meetings
1. How often
2. Topics
E. In-service training
1. How often
2. Topics
3. Evaluation of presentations
F. Teaching load
1. Number of clock hours per week in class
2. Average student-teacher ratio
3. Number and identification of subject preparations
G. Student attendance
1. Number of clock hours per week in class
2. To whom are attendance forms given
3. Administrative policy of excessive absenteeism
H. Availability for additional academic assistance
I. Preparation, utilization, and evaluation of course syllabi--are they given to students
J. Selection of textbooks and supplementary materials
K. Use of community resources
1. Guest lecturers
2. Field trips
3. Externships/internships
L. Instructional evaluation
1. Who does them (e.g., director, director of education, students?)
2. How is evaluation performed?
3. Who discusses results?
M. Use of the resource center/library
N. Describe best and worst features of working conditions
O. Recommendations for improvement

REVIEW AND EVALUATE

VII. Annual Institutional Report (use most recent AIR)

A. Verify the Overall Counts

Verify that the back-up data lists have the same number of names as the number reported on the AIR. The following counts should be verified:

1. Total enrollment must equal question 3 on the AIR.
2. Students enrolled at the beginning of the period must equal question 1.
3. New students during the period must equal question 2a.
4. Re-entries must equal question 2b.
5. Students taking less than a complete program must equal question 5a.
6. Students completing a program must equal question 5b.
7. Students graduating from a program must equal question 5c.
8. Students withdrawing from a program must equal question 5d.
9. Students enrolled on the ending date of the period must equal question 5e.
10. Graduates and completers placed in-field must equal question 10a.
11. Graduates and completers placed in a related field must equal question 10b.
12. Graduates and completers placed out of field must equal question 10c.
13. Graduates and completers not placed or where there is no other documented placement evidence must equal question 10i.
14. Graduates and completers not available for placement (for any reason) must equal the total of questions 10d, 10e, 10f, 10g, and 10h.

If the number of the names on the back-up data matches the figures reported on the AIR, the report should state that the submitted back-up data agrees with the figures reported on the Annual Institutional Report. Back-up data which does not match the number of names listed must be noted in the report. The report must include the number of names listed on the back-up data and the number reported on the AIR.

B. From the enrollment listing of students select an appropriate sample of files to review:

10% of the total enrollment listed on the AIR
Minimum number of files: 20
Maximum number of files: 50

C. Verify Enrollment Data

Sort the selected folders into three groups:

1. Students at the Start of the Period
2. New Students During the Period
3. Re-entries

Alphabetize the files in each group and compare to the appropriate back-up data list. The report must note if they are any discrepancies between the information reported on the back-up data and the information found in the student files. When all files in the sample are reported on the back-up data accurately and the overall counts for the enrollment section of the AIR match, the report should state that "*Based on a sample of X files, the enrollment information reported on the AIR was verified*."

D. Verify Retention Data

Collect all of the files from step C and re-sort them into five groups:

1. Enrolled in less than a full program
2. Completed a Program
3. Graduated from a Program
4. Withdrew from a Program

5. Enrolled at the Ending Date

Alphabetize the files in each group and compare to the appropriate back-up data list. The report must note any discrepancy. When all files in the sample are reported on the back-up data accurately and the overall counts for the retention section of the AIR match, the report should state that "*the retention information reported on the AIR was verified*" and include the number of files reviewed. If there are any errors, note the specific errors and their frequency.

E. Verify Placement Data

Take the files from the completer and graduate groups (2 and 3 in D above) and sort these files into five groups:

1. Placed in Field
2. Placed in Related Field
3. Placed Out of Field
4. Not Placed
5. Not Available for Placement

Alphabetize the files in each group and compare to the appropriate back-up data list. The report must note any discrepancy. Call all placed in field and out of field graduates or employers to determine accuracy of placement information. When all files in the sample are reported on the back-up data accurately and the overall counts for the placement section of the AIR match, the report should state that "*the placement information reported on the AIR was verified"* and include the number of graduate files reviewed. If there are any errors, note the specific errors and their frequency.

VIII. Records

A. Student records (current, withdrawn, and graduate)
   1. Application for admission and/or enrollment contract
   2. Official high school and other postsecondary transcripts or GED scores or attestation form
   3. Entrance test(s), if applicable
   4. Course completions and grades to date
   5. Attendance records
   6. Counseling records
   7. Financial records
   8. Final transcript

B. Faculty and administrative staff records
   1. Job descriptions
   2. Official college transcripts
      a. Look for seal; not stamped "Issued to Student"
      b. Make sure there is a transcript for each degree listed
      c. Determine if degree is appropriate; review grades received in related subjects
      d. If degree is out of field, verify minimum of two years' work experience in fields
   3. Application for employment
   4. Faculty development plan
   5. In-service training
   6. Professional growth
   7. Employee contracts, if applicable
   8. Evaluations

IX. Classrooms

A. What teaching methods are used?
B. Are teaching methods employed effective and appropriate for the subject matter?
C. Is the course being taught as outlined in the syllabus?
D. How is the rapport between the instructor and the student?

E. Do students participate in class, e.g., questions, note taking, presentations
F. How is instructional equipment utilized?
G. Are facilities adequate for type of class and number of students?

X. Instructional Resources

A. Approximate number and quality of book titles, periodicals, reference materials and their adequacy for the programs offered
B. Circulation system, if used
C. Evidence of usage by faculty and students
D. Accessibility, location, hours (if housed in one central location)

XI. Instructional Equipment

A. In working order
B. Up to date
C. Sufficient quantity for present enrollment
D. Applicable to courses offered
E. Usage
F. Leased or owned; maintenance
G. Distributed or centrally located
H. Appropriate software licensure, as applicable

XII. Publications

A. Review catalog
B. Review advertising (e.g., newspaper, T.V. script, radio script)
C. Review all school publications for accuracy and appropriateness

XIII. Educational Facilities

A. Buildings and grounds
B. Classrooms, offices, and lounges
C. Furniture and equipment
D. Review code compliance documentation (fire, safety, sanitation)
E. Examine fire extinguisher inspection notes (check expiration dates), fire exits, and evacuation plan

EVALUATION REPORT GUIDELINES

This portion of the publication contains guideline questions to assist evaluators in preparing reports for initial, reevaluation, additional location inclusion, distance education, readiness, credential inclusion, and new program visits. Questions also are provided to assess distance education and other forms of nontraditional education.

Please note that all sections correspond directly to the Evaluation Standards listed in Title III of the ACICS *Accreditation Criteria*. The templates are revised as needed prior to every travel cycle and the most current version should be downloaded from the ACICS web site: Home > Evaluators > Evaluator Resources > Report Templates

A recommendation section is included at the end of each report. Accreditation has two fundamental purposes: to assure the quality of the institution and to promote the improvement of the institution. As members of the evaluation team, you have helped the Council and the institution to realize the first of these purposes through your report which analyzes the institution's compliance with the *Accreditation Criteria*.

To assist the institution in achieving the second purpose of accreditation -- that of improvement beyond its compliance with the standards necessary for accreditation -- members of the team are invited and encouraged to use this opportunity to suggest any practices, policies, or procedures which might improve the institution's educational and administrative quality. Your recommendations are for the benefit of the institution and will be shared only with the institution. They will not enter into any considerations of the Council regarding the accreditation status of the institution.