

TO: ACICS-Accredited Institutions and Other Interested Parties
FROM: Accrediting Council for Independent Colleges and Schools
DATE: May 7, 2013 – REVISED
SUBJECT: Final Criteria, Proposed Criteria and Other Information

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	(Please respond by Friday, July 12, 2013)	

I. FINAL CRITERIA REVISIONS

At its April 2013 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. 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. CAMPUS ACCOUNTABILITY REPORT

Explanation of Final Changes

The Council approved final language changing the Campus Accountability Report deadline. The extension of this deadline is intended to provide more time for students who graduate toward the end of the normal reporting period on June 30, to take required exams, if required, and find employment.

2-1-801. Annual Accountability Reports. The Annual Accountability Reports must be submitted on Council forms, comply with Council guidelines, and be certified by the chief executive officer of the institution. Data must be submitted separately on the Campus Accountability Report (CAR) for each main campus and for each additional location. A centrally controlled institution must also submit a consolidated Institutional Accountability Report (IAR) containing information and data on the institution as a whole. These reports are due on or before ~~September 15~~ November 1 annually. Failure to submit the Annual Accountability Reports in a timely manner will result in revocation of accreditation.

B. UNANNOUNCED VISITS

Explanation of Final Changes

The Council approved final language which removed dated language and eliminated the use of the resource room/library as a possible location for a visiting team in Appendix B.

APPENDIX B Procedures and Guidelines for Unannounced Visits

VISIT PROCEDURES

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

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

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

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

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

C. SATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS

Explanation of Final Changes

The Council approved final language to eliminate redundancy; to incorporate a minimum CGPA for graduate programs and to outline information regarding the evaluation of international institutions.

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 monitoring whether a student meets the minimum qualitative and quantitative components of the standards ~~and~~ notifies students when satisfactory academic progress is not being made.
3. The standards of satisfactory academic progress provide for minimum qualitative standards, such as a grade point average or completion of work projects, which can be measured against a norm.
4. The policy defines a maximum time frame, not to exceed 150% of the normal program length, as defined by the institution, for all programs, in which the educational objective must be successfully completed (e.g., number of academic years, credit hours attempted, clock hours completed, months/weeks, terms or modules, etc. as appropriate), as opposed to simply setting a time limit on eligibility for Title IV financial aid.
5. The institution has provisions for an evaluation point at least by the end of each academic year (or at 50% of the normal program length if the program is one

academic year or less) that determine whether the student has met the qualitative and quantitative components of the standards.

6. The institution has provisions for utilizing and publishing a schedule designating the minimum percentage or amount of work that a student must successfully complete at the end of each increment to complete the educational program within the maximum time frame.

7. The institution has provisions for determining at the end of each increment whether the student has met the qualitative and quantitative components of the standards. The qualitative and quantitative standards must be cumulative and must include all periods of the student's enrollment regardless of whether or not the student receives federal financial aid.

8. The institution's policies define the effect on satisfactory academic progress of course withdrawals, incomplete grades, repeated courses, and non-punitive grades. The institution's policies define the effect of non-credit or remedial courses on satisfactory academic progress.

9. The institution has provisions for an evaluation at the end of the second academic year and at the end of each subsequent academic year(s) where the student must have a minimum cumulative grade point average (CGPA) of 2.0 on a scale of 4.0, C, or its equivalent, or has academic standing consistent with the institution's requirements for graduation. A student receiving federal financial aid who does not meet the CGPA standards at the end of the second year will no longer be eligible for financial aid, may not be placed on probation, and must be dismissed, unless the student wishes to continue without being eligible for federal financial aid. However, a student not meeting the CGPA standards at the end of the second year may remain as an enrolled student who is eligible for federal financial aid if there are documented mitigating circumstances (i.e., death in the family, sickness of the student, etc.).

10. If the institution places students on warning, or on probation, as defined in sections 11 and 12 below, the institution's policy must describe these statuses.

11. An institution that evaluates academic progress at the end of each payment period may assign warning status to a student who fails to make satisfactory academic progress. A student may be assigned to warning status without an appeal or other action by the student. A student on warning may continue to receive assistance under federal financial aid programs for one payment period despite a determination that the student is not making satisfactory academic progress.

12. The institution must have an appeal process for students who do not meet the requirements of the institution's satisfactory academic progress policy. When an institution grants a student's appeal for mitigating circumstances, the student will

be placed on probation 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 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, for undergraduate programs and 3.0, B for graduate programs or their equivalent upon graduation ~~from all programs~~.

D. ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE PROGRAMS

Explanation of Final Changes

The Council approved final language in Appendix F to reflect that the information detailed in this section is a requirement.

APPENDIX F Requirements Guidelines for English as a Second Language Programs

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

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

SEPARATELY ELIGIBLE, STAND-ALONE ESL PROGRAMS

Council Requirements

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

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

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

1. Adhere to the stated mission of the program when developing the curricula;
2. Administer, at entrance and exit, a nationally recognized exam of English comprehension (e.g., Test of English as a Foreign Language, Test of Spoken English.)
3. Provide documentation that all admitted students are enrolled in accordance with Section 3-1-303.
4. Verify or assess at entrance, with supporting documentation, that the enrolling student already has knowledge, training, or skills in a vocational field, unless the student is enrolled solely to obtain ESL competency unrelated to a vocation (also a Department of Education regulation.)

5. Describe the placement services, if any, to be offered to graduates of the ESL program. Institutions are not required to include these graduates in their placement statistics.
6. Employ degreed faculty who have prior experience in this field of instruction.
7. Involve faculty in professional organizations and workshops enabling them to meet the special needs of the ESL student.

Department of Education Regulations

The institution must provide information or documentation that the program:

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

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

ESL COURSES AS PART OF AN ELIGIBLE PROGRAM

Council Requirements

Conversion from clock to credit hour for the ESL courses must be appropriate and

in compliance with Department of Education regulations for remedial coursework.

Department of Education Regulations

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

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

Summary

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

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

E. DISCLOSURE AND NOTIFICATION

Explanation of Final Changes

The Council approved final language to remove dated terminology from Appendix G.

APPENDIX G Guidelines on Disclosure and Notification

These guidelines are designed to inform institutions of the policies of the Council and to guide staff in disclosing information and providing materials to third parties regarding an institution's accreditation. Many policies are required by federal law and regulation.

The policies presented below are not intended to cover every situation, and the Council exercises considerable discretion in balancing the need for confidentiality in the accreditation process with the need to disclose information to the public, including students and student applicants, and to other interested third parties, including government agencies. The Council will provide information requested by the U.S. Department of Education that may bear on an institution's compliance with federal student financial aid requirements. Please refer to Title II, Chapter 3 for additional information.

1. The Council maintains and makes available to member institutions, appropriate governmental agencies, and the public complete information regarding its accreditation criteria, policies, and practices; the institutions that it currently accredits, including the dates when the institutions are scheduled to be reviewed for new grants of accreditation; and the names, educational backgrounds, and professional qualifications of its commissioners and senior administrative staff. This information is provided in written documents available from the Council office or on the Council's Web site. These documents include ~~an annual~~ directory of accredited institutions and an annual report, copies of which are forwarded automatically to the U.S. Department of Education, state regulatory agencies, and other recognized institutional accrediting agencies.

2. The Council will notify the U.S. Department of Education, state regulatory agencies, other accrediting agencies, other interested third parties, and the public of all Council actions that affect an institution's grant of accreditation, institutional closings, and of the voluntary withdrawal or expiration of accreditation within 30 days.

In the case of the public, however, the Council will provide written notice of the decisions listed below within 24 hours of its notice to the institution:

(a) A final decision to place an institution on probation or equivalent status.

(b) A final decision to deny, withdraw, suspend, revoke, or terminate the accreditation of an institution. Deferral actions will include an explanation that the institution's application is pending and that additional information has been requested. Negative actions subject to appeal will be denoted with a statement that the action is subject to appeal and is not final unless the institution does not exercise its appeal rights or until the institution's appeal rights have been exhausted. The disclosure of Review Board decisions will be in accordance with the procedures described in Section 2-3-607. The Council retains the discretion and the responsibility to communicate other relevant accreditation information with appropriate agencies and regulatory bodies.

3. Within 60 days of a final negative action, the Council will also make available to the agencies above and the public upon request, a brief statement summarizing the reasons for the negative action determination and the official comments that

the institution may wish to make with regard to the Council's decision, or evidence that the affected institution has been offered the opportunity to provide official comment.

4. The Council will inform the U.S. Department of Education of any institution which the Council believes fails to comply with Title IV law or regulations or is engaged in fraud and abuse or demonstrates systemic noncompliance with respect to use of the Department's definition of credit hour or significant noncompliance regarding conformity with commonly accepted practice in the assignment of credit hours to one or more programs at the institution. The institution will then be given an opportunity to evidence why it is in compliance with Title IV requirements

5. The Council will notify the public through its Web site and other means, as appropriate, of the following:

(a) at least one year in advance of grant expirations, a listing of all institutions with current grants of accreditation due to expire; and

(b) as soon as practical, a listing of all institutions which have applied for initial grants of accreditation. This notification will include guidance on how third parties may comment on these institutions' qualifications for accreditation.

6. The Secretary of Education's grant of recognition constitutes a "grant of authority" to the Secretary to conduct site visits (both to ACICS and to the institutions) and to gain access to agency records, personnel, and facilities on an announced and unannounced basis.

7. The Council automatically will submit an annual report to the Secretary of Education.

8. The Council will provide information regarding debarment actions on request.

F. ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Explanation of Final Changes

The Council approved final language that considers for accreditation, distance education institutions that offer a residential component.

1-2-100 - MINIMUM ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

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

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

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

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

(b) It shall be legally organized; licensed by (1) the appropriate state education agency for postsecondary institutions or (2) the appropriate state agency for authorizing the conduct of business in that state for noninstitutional entities; and have offered its educational services to the general public for at least two years immediately prior to consideration of the application by ACICS.

(c) Its mission shall be to offer educational programs which help students develop skills and competencies to enhance their careers.

(d) Its residential enrollment and enrollment in each program shall be sufficient both to support course work and learning experiences that, separately or in combination, constitute measurable and defined educational programs, and to enable ACICS to assess the educational effectiveness of those programs. Institutions that are considered distance education institutions may be considered on a case-by-case basis provided they require a residential component.

(e) It shall have a sufficient number of graduates from a majority of its programs to enable ACICS to assess the educational effectiveness of those programs. Programs offered at any credential level from which there are no graduates will be reviewed in accordance with Section [2-2-502](#).

(f) It shall be in compliance with all applicable laws and regulations.

(g) It shall be organized as a corporation, as a limited partnership with a corporate general partner, or as a limited liability company.

(h) Its evaluation for accreditation shall be authorized by the chief executive officer.

(i) Its owners or managers shall not have been debarred by ACICS ([See Section 2-3-1000](#)).

G. APPLICATION PROCESSES

Explanation of Final Changes

The Council approved final language to eliminate conflicts in current procedures outlined in the Criteria.

2-2-101. Initiation of Additional Campus Activity.

An additional activity includes any ongoing instructional activity offered at a site away from the main facility of an institution. Activity at a site that meets the Council's definition of an "Additional Location" is described in Section 1-3-100, Classification of Campuses. Activity at a site that does not meet the definition of an Additional Location is referred to below as a "Campus Addition." Reporting requirements are as follows:

- (a) *Additional Location.* It is the responsibility of the institution to ~~notify~~ secure approval from ACICS of the intention to initiate an additional location before the location begins classes. If approved, Activity must be initiated at the additional location within one year of the proposed start date. An additional location must be approved by the Council before advertising, recruiting, and enrollment may take place. Failure to ~~notify~~ secure approval from ACICS prior to the initiation of an additional location may call into question the accreditation of the institution.

The institution shall provide, on Council forms, the rationale for initiation of the additional location and other information about the educational programs, credentials to be awarded, faculty, learning resources, physical and financial resources, strength in supporting fields, admission and graduation requirements, compliance with state law and authority to operate, number of students, and administrative arrangements. An acceptable catalog which identifies the additional location also shall be included as part of the application.

The Council will monitor the number of additional location applications submitted for each main campus and main campuses under common ownership based on a demonstration of sound administrative and financial capabilities. The Council reserves the right to limit the number of additional locations based on its review of demonstrated administrative and financial capabilities.

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

of any additional locations. An institution under a show-cause directive, a negative action, or in a probation status will not receive approval from ACICS for the initiation of any additional location while the action is in effect.

(b) *Campus Addition.* It is the responsibility of the institution to ~~notify~~ secure approval from ACICS prior to initiation of any new educational activity which is under the direct control of the on-site administration of a main campus or additional location and at a site that is apart from the primary location of that campus. In addition, if that activity involves 50% or more of an academic program, the campus addition must be approved by the Council before advertising, recruiting, and enrollment may take place. ~~and~~ If approved, activity must be initiated at the campus addition within one year of the proposed start date. The institution shall provide, on Council forms, the location of the activity, its educational purpose, the programs offered, the number of students involved, and any additional information ACICS may request. A catalog for the campus which identifies the campus addition also shall be included as part of the application.

Any institution which has a campus that (1) is under review by the Financial Review Committee of ACICS, (2) shows either a net loss or a negative net worth on its most recent financial report, (3) is required to report placement and/or retention data to the Institutional Effectiveness Committee, or (4) is under a deferral action by the Council must request and receive prior permission from ACICS for the initiation of any additional campus activity at which 50% or more of an academic program is provided. An institution under a show-cause directive, a negative action, or in a probation status will not receive approval for the initiation of any such additional campus activity while the action is in effect.

2-2-102. Evaluation of Additional Campus Activity.

All activity for which approval is sought will be evaluated by ACICS before approval is granted. Following is a description of those evaluations.

(a) *Additional Location.* Initial inclusion of an additional location within the scope of the accreditation of the institution may be granted by the Executive Director upon receipt of all required information. ~~The Council must be notified prior to the initiation of a new location.~~ An institution proposing the initiation of a new location must ~~submit Part One of the Additional Location Application and accompanying exhibits follow the procedures as outlined by the Council and disclosed on its Web site.~~ A new location ~~processed by the Council must be approved and Part One of the Additional Location Application processed must receive initial inclusion by the Council before an institution advertises, recruits, or enrolls advertising, recruiting or enrolling students at the proposed location.~~ The Council reserves the right to require a preliminary visit to any potential additional location prior to the granting of initial inclusion. An additional location that is granted initial inclusion by the Executive Director will be required to undergo a verification visit within six months after the initial class start date. Following this visit, the Council may require the ~~institution~~

additional location to submit additional information to satisfy areas of concern identified during the evaluation.

A decision regarding the final inclusion of an additional location will be made by the Council in full session following a visit by an evaluation team. Prior to the final inclusion visit, the chief on-site administrator of the location will be required to attend an Accreditation Workshop and to ~~submit Part Two of the Additional Location Application~~ submit additional documentation as outlined and disclosed on the ACICS Web site. The evaluation will normally be scheduled for twelve to eighteen months after the initial class start date and will be conducted by a team of evaluators determined by the size of the institution, the type and number of programs being offered, and other special circumstances. Identification of significant deficiencies during the verification or final inclusion visits can result in an immediate show-cause directive to the institution.

Only after a determination of acceptability, either at the initial or final inclusion level, and notification to the institution of the decision, may the institution consider an additional location to be included within the scope of the institution's grant of accreditation. If approval is withheld, the withholding may be treated as a deferral or a denial, based on circumstances, and the institution may exercise its due process rights as outlined in Title II, Chapter 3.

- (b) *Campus Addition.* The Executive Director is authorized to evaluate and approve additions to a main or additional locations ~~campus at locations~~ that are apart from the primary location of that campus. Educational activities at a campus addition ~~of an accredited institution~~ are eligible to be evaluated for inclusion within the scope of the accreditation of the managing campus provided that the campus addition has been established to meet a specific educational need or condition and is authorized by the appropriate governmental education authority, if applicable.

~~An institution-~~The managing campus proposing the initiation of a campus addition must submit a Campus Addition Application. ~~The institution~~ managing campus must assure the Council that the educational activities at the campus addition complement the overall objectives of the institution. Based on its review of the application materials, ACICS may (1) grant final inclusion of the campus addition or (2) deny the application.

A campus addition that is granted final inclusion by the Executive Director will be required to undergo a verification visit within six months after the initial class start date if 50% or more of a program will be offered at the site. Following this visit, the Council may require the institution to submit additional information to satisfy areas of concern identified during the evaluation.

All additions to the campuses of an institution are evaluated during an institution's regular evaluation for a ~~new grant~~ renewal of accreditation.

2-2-201. *Additional Location-to-Main Campus Reclassification*

An additional location is eligible for evaluation as the freestanding main campus of a separately accredited, single campus institution only if it has been operating as an approved location for at least two years. Additional locations seeking main campus status must submit ~~an Application for Accreditation~~ the appropriate application, audited financial statements certified by an independent certified public accountant for the institution's most recent fiscal year, and undergo an on-site evaluation visit. The visit will not occur until audited financial statements are received.

2-2-202. *Reassignment and Consolidation of Campuses*

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

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 initiation of a new program process is required for any program of study never before offered on the campus whether delivered via residential, distance education, or hybrid. The institution or campus must submit an application and supporting documentation as outlined on the ACICS Web site. ~~program outline, course descriptions, an explanation of the mode of educational delivery, and supporting data.~~ Additional Where specified, information must be submitted on Council forms. Additions or deletions of courses included in a program of study that change the overall objective of a currently approved program, require the initiation of a new program application process. The submission of a Campus

Accountability Report or catalog identifying a new program does not constitute appropriate notification to the Council.

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 compliance warning, a show-cause directive, a negative action, or in a probation status must obtain prior approval to apply for a new program. Additionally, any institution subject to a comprehensive on-site evaluation as a result of extensive substantive changes must obtain prior permission from ACICS for the initiation of any new program. ~~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 existing programs require the initiation of a substantive change to an existing program process. The submission of an Campus Accountability Report or catalog identifying program changes does not constitute appropriate notification to the Council. The following are changes to an existing program would require the initiation of a substantive change to an existing program application process:

- (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 do not change the overall objective of a currently approved program.

~~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 initial grant of accreditation and ~~regular evaluation for a new grant renewal~~ of accreditation evaluations.

If a new program is determined to be “out of scope” and is 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~~ final 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.~~

If, as a result of any new program visit, ACICS determines that the overall quality of an institution is being diminished, the institution may be scheduled for a full reevaluation.

2-2-502. Initiation and Evaluation of New Programs at Higher Credential Levels than Previously Offered.

An institution or campus 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~~ initiation of a new program application process, 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 on quarterly reporting~~ to the Financial Review Committee ~~must~~ may be required to obtain prior permission from ~~the Council~~ ACICS 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~~ a readiness visit will be scheduled within six

months of the initial start date of the program. The purpose of the evaluation readiness visit will be to assess the institution's initial capacity and 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 readiness 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 credential inclusion site visit once the program has a sufficient enrollment and/or a sufficient number of graduates. The credential inclusion site report and the institution's response to the report will be reviewed by the Council at its next regularly scheduled meeting. Final inclusion of the new program will be granted by the Council only after the follow-up credential inclusion 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. Institutions or campuses requesting to offer a new program at a higher credential more than one level above the current credential level, must first submit a request to the Council. The Council reserves the right to require a preliminary visit to the campus prior to the granting of such a request.

2-2-504. Changes to Programs.

(a) Substantive Changes. Institutions must apply for approval from ACICS for any of the following changes to a program prior to their implementation or the revised program will be considered an unapproved program. Failure to do so will result in a show-cause action for offering an unapproved program or unapproved mode of delivery. Institutions must submit the appropriate form and supporting documentation for the following:

- (i) the offering of a program at a higher education credential than currently approved for;
- (ii) any changes of 25% or more in existing contact hours, credit awarded, curriculum content (courses offered), or program length of a currently awarded program;

- (iii) a change from clock to credit hours or vice versa, or a change from quarter to semester credit hours or vice versa;
- (iv) a change in the overall objective of the program;
- (v) the initiation of an on-line delivery format ~~for less than 50%~~ of a program of study;
- ~~(vi) the initiation of an on-line delivery format for 50% or more of a program of study.~~

~~Changes (i) through (iv) to programs as indicated above require the submission and approval of a New Program Application Form. Changes as noted in (v) and (vi) above require the submission and approval of a Distance Education Activity Application~~ the appropriate application. An institution with initial approval to offer programs via online delivery may offer only programs or courses included in the ~~Distance Education Activity Application~~ application until final approval by the Council. If the institution wishes to offer additional programs on-line before final ~~action~~ inclusion by the Council, it must separately obtain approval for each program. If the institution wishes to add, delete, or modify on-line courses before final inclusion of online delivery ~~action~~ by the Council, it must separately obtain approval for each course change. Institutions with no prior online final inclusion, that plan to offer 100% of a program online, must first submit a request to the Director of Campus Development for a preliminary assessment of the institution's plans and capacity.

~~For changes as described in (iii) above, the institution must submit only Parts I and II of the New Program Application.~~

(b) Non-Substantive Changes. Institutions must ~~notify, but do not need approval from the Council before implementing~~ submit for staff review and acknowledgement the following changes to programs.

- (i) any change of less than 25% in existing contact hours; credit awarded, curriculum content (courses offered), or program length of a currently approved program; or
- (ii) a change in the name of an existing program that does not change the overall objective of the program, or
- (iii) planned termination of an approved program.

All changes to a program as indicated above under (b) require official notification be submitted to the Council using the ~~“Non-Substantive Program Modification Form.”~~ appropriate application as outlined on the ACICS Web site. If cumulative changes to a single program within a twelve-month period equal or exceed 25% of the contact hours, credit hours, curriculum content or program length, a New Program Application substantive change to an existing program

application process ~~form~~ must be ~~submitted~~ initiated (See Section 2-2-504(a)). ~~Institutions which initiate an identical non-substantive change to the same program offered at multiple campuses may submit a consolidated form. Any major change to the non-substantive change applicable to a specific campus will require the submission of a separate Non-Substantive Program Modification Form.~~

The submission of a Campus Accountability Report or catalog identifying program changes does not constitute appropriate notification to the Council.

~~Furthermore,~~ [sentence moved to paragraph above]

2-2-506. Termination of Programs.

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

All institutions subject to the withdrawal of approval for a program or who voluntarily terminate an approved program will be directed to submit a program termination plan that conforms to the following requirements. ~~which also apply in the case of voluntary termination of a program.~~ New students may not be enrolled in any program which cannot be completed prior to the termination date for which public notice has been given. Moreover, the institution is obligated to continue to offer appropriate courses, including prerequisites, so that currently enrolled students will be able to complete the program and receive the credential which was their designated educational objective. For this purpose, the period of time need not extend beyond sufficient time for students already enrolled and maintaining normal academic progress to complete the program.

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

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

3-1-513. Program Development.

The educational programs shall evidence a well-organized sequence of appropriate subjects leading to an occupational objective, an academic credential, or both. The following apply:

(a) The curricula shall be published in the institution's catalog and shall state objectives specific to each curriculum. Additionally, there shall be a detailed syllabus on file for each course in each curriculum that is made available to each student enrolled in the class. For independent study courses, institutions are required to develop a learning contract signed by the student and institution that outlines the course objectives and procedures unique to this form of instruction. For practica, externships, and internships, institutions are required to develop a written and mutually signed agreement that outlines the arrangement between the institution and the practicum site, including specific learning objectives, course requirements, and evaluation criteria. The Council's expectations for detailed syllabi, independent study, practica, externships, and internships are outlined in the Glossary.

(b) The courses offered shall be available when needed by the student in the normal pursuit of a program of study. Prerequisites must be indicated. The prerequisite system must assure proper qualifications of students in any given class and provide an increasing level of difficulty as the student progresses.

Institutions may record student progress in clock hours or credit hours as defined in the Glossary. When appropriate, special consideration should be given to remediation and English as a Second Language programs. (For additional information, see Appendix F, Guidelines for English as a Second Language).

H. LEARNING RESOURCES AND SERVICE REQUIREMENTS

Explanation of Final Changes

The Council approved final language regarding library resources and services due to the advancement in online learning resources.

3-4-401. Staff. A professionally trained individual shall supervise and manage library and instructional resources, facilitate their integration into all phases of the institution's curricular and educational offerings, and assist students in their use. A professionally trained individual is one who holds a bachelor's or master's degree in library or information science or a comparable program, or state certification to work as a librarian, where applicable. The institution must provide evidence that the degree is from an institution accredited by an agency recognized by the United States Department of Education. If the degree is from an institution outside of the United States, the institution must be recognized by its government and the transcript must be translated into English and be evaluated by a member of the Association of International Credentials Evaluators (AICE) or the National Association of Credential Evaluation Services (NACES) to determine the

equivalency of the degree to degrees awarded by institutions in the United States. The professionally trained individual must participate in documented professional growth activities.

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

3-5-401. Staff. A professionally trained individual shall supervise and manage library and instructional resources, facilitate their integration into all phases of the institution's curricular and educational offerings, and assist students in their use. A professionally trained individual is one who holds a bachelor's or master's degree in library or information science or a comparable program, or state certification to work as a librarian, where applicable. The institution must provide evidence that the degree is from an institution accredited by an agency recognized by the United States Department of Education. If the degree is from an institution outside of the United States, the institution must be recognized by their government and the transcript must be translated into English and be evaluated by a member of the Association of International Credentials Evaluators (AICE) or the National Association of Credential Evaluation Services (NACES) to determine the equivalency of the degree to degrees awarded by institutions in the United States. The professionally trained individual must participate in documented professional growth activities.

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

II. PROPOSED CRITERIA REVISIONS

At its April 2013 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. CATALOG

Explanation of Proposed Changes

The Council proposes to modify language to eliminate redundancy; to include information on appropriate catalog addenda and initial applicants and remove dated language.

APPENDIX C ~~Guidelines for~~ Institutional Publications Requirements

~~This Appendix~~ ese guidelines are designed to assist institutions in complying with includes the Council's criteria for institutional publications, including catalogs, advertising literature, and other published documents describing the institution.

CATALOG

The Council requires all accredited institutions and all applicant institutions to publish an acceptable catalog. Accredited institutions under the same ownership or control may publish a common catalog, but it should be specific as to the faculty, programs, and student services available at each location (see "Multiple-School Catalogs" in this Appendix ~~ese Guidelines~~). All enrolled students must have access to the current catalog.

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

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

At a minimum, the catalog must contain the following items: ~~Items 7, 8, and 16 (listing of faculty, academic calendar, and statement of tuition and fees) may be listed on a catalog supplement, provided that such supplement is printed, dated, and identified as part of the current catalog, and the catalog makes reference to the supplement. Thereafter, this supplement must be enclosed in each copy of the catalog.~~

1. A table of contents and/or an index.
2. An indication, on the front cover or on the title page, of the year or years for which the catalog is effective.
3. The names and titles of the administrators of the institution.

4. A statement of legal control which includes the names of trustees, directors, and officers of the corporation.
5. If the institution is now accredited, a statement denoting this fact (see “Statement of Accreditation” in these Guidelines).
6. A statement of the mission of the institution.
7. A listing of the full-time faculty members, showing:
 - (a) academic credentials held;
 - (b) institutions awarding the credentials; and
 - (c) the area of teaching specialization.
8. An academic calendar (calendar of events) showing beginning and ending dates of terms, quarters, or semesters; holidays; registration dates, etc.
9. The full disclosure of the institution’s admission requirements, policies, and procedures, including the basis for admissions, test requirements, advanced standing requirements, and experiential learning assessment requirements.
10. A statement of the curriculums (programs) offered, including for each:
 - (a) a statement of the objective or purpose of the curriculum;
 - (b) an accurate and complete listing of the courses included in each curriculum, each with a unique identifying number and title;
 - (c) the credit or clock hours awarded for each subject;
 - (d) the total credits or clock hours required for satisfactory completion of the curriculum;
 - (e) requirements for certification, licensing, or registration in the program career field, as appropriate; and
 - (f) any additional or special requirements for completion (such as practica or externships e.g., typing, shorthand).
11. A description of each course (subject) offered, including:
 - (a) identifying number;
 - (b) title;

- (c) credit or clock hours awarded;
 - (d) a complete but concise description of the contents of the course; and
 - (e) prerequisites, if any.
12. An explanation of the grading or marking system (consistent with that appearing on the student transcript).
 13. A definition of the unit of credit. If credit hour, identify whether quarter or semester. (See Section [3-1-515](#) for additional information.)
 14. An explanation of standards of satisfactory progress. (See Section [3-1-420](#) for additional information).
 15. A description of the certificates, diplomas, and/or degrees awarded, together with a statement of the requirements to be met in each instance.
 16. A statement of the tuition, fees, and all other regular and special charges.
 17. A complete and accurate listing of all scholarships offered (see Section [3-1-431](#) of the *Accreditation Criteria*).
 18. A statement of the institution's refund policy and formula relative to method of financial obligation. This policy must be clearly outlined and must comply with Sections [3-1-433](#) and [3-1-434](#), of the *Accreditation Criteria*.
 19. A statement pertaining to the nature and extent of student services offered (e.g., counseling and placement).
 20. A grievance procedure that includes the name and address of ACICS, unless the grievance procedure is published in a student handbook.
 21. If the institution offers degrees, the catalog must include the following information:
 - (a) for occupational associate's degree programs, identification of courses that satisfy the general education requirement and an explanation of the course numbering system;
 - (b) for academic associate's degree programs, identification of courses that satisfy the general education and concentration requirements and an explanation of the course numbering system;

(c) for bachelor's degree programs, identification of upper-division courses and courses that satisfy the general education and concentration requirements and an explanation of the course numbering system; and

(d) for post-baccalaureate or graduate degree programs (master's and doctorate degree programs), a separate section in the catalog describing the program requirements, admissions procedures, transfer policies, graduation requirements, regulations, and course descriptions. (See Sections 3-6-800 and 3-7-800). ~~master's degree programs, an explanation of the course numbering system.~~

22. If the institution offers courses via distance education, the catalog must include the following information:

(a) a description of each mode of distance education delivery method used;

(b) the admission requirements for the courses or program(s) of study offered through distance education required only if different from the admission requirements for the residential programs;

(c) a description of tests used in determining access to distance education courses and programs, if applicable;

(d) a description of the resources and equipment the students must have to avail themselves of the instruction (including, computer requirements such as hardware and software, internet access, access to library/college for monitoring of examinations, etc.); and

(e) the special costs and fees associated specifically with distance education (e.g., platform access fees, on-line library access fees, purchase of books on-line).

ADDENDA/SUPPLEMENT TO THE CATALOG

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

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

MULTIPLE-SCHOOL CATALOGS

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

ADVERTISING

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

1. All advertising and promotional literature ~~provided used~~ by an institution must clearly indicate that training or education, and not employment, is being offered.
2. All advertising and promotional literature must include the correct name of the institution. So-called “blind” advertisements are not permitted ~~considered misleading in character~~.
3. Institutions advertising to attract students ~~placing advertisements~~ in classified columns of newspapers or the equivalent on websites and the other electronic ~~other publications to attract students~~ must use only classifications such as “Education,” “Schools,” or “Instruction.” Headings such as “Help Wanted,” “Employment,” or “Business Opportunities” may be used only to procure employees for the institution.
4. ~~Letters of endorsement, commendation, or recommendation may be used in catalogs, sales literature, or advertising, provided prior consent is obtained and no remuneration is made for either the consent or use of the endorsement. Such letters shall be kept on file and be subject to review. Testimonial letters may be used only when they are strictly factual and portray currently correct conditions or~~

~~facts~~ Testimonials used in advertising must reflect the opinions or experience of a current or prospective student or graduate of the institution. Testimonial message must be factual and portray current conditions. They cannot contain any representations that would be deceptive or could not be substantiated by the institution. The institution must maintain a written release from the individual providing the testimonial on file.

5. An institution shall not use the words “free” and “guarantee” for advertising or marketing sales promotion purposes in a manner that is misleading to prospective potential or current students. A disclosure must be made for services which are funded by third parties that are offered at no cost to students.

6. An institution shall not offer monetary incentives to the general public to visit, enroll in, attend, or complete a program. ~~Further, monetary incentives for failure to be placed in a job shall not be offered as an inducement to enroll.~~ The institution cannot make guarantee or similar claims regarding job placement or salary for graduates.

7. References to financial aid availability ~~shall~~ must use include the phrase “for those who qualify.” Financial aid cannot be the sole source of an advertisement.

STATEMENT OF ACCREDITATION

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

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

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

~~or~~

Name of institution) is a (junior college [if institution awards an academic associate’s degree] or senior college [if institution awards a bachelor’s degree]) accredited by the Accrediting Council for Independent Colleges and Schools to award (name all applicable specific credential levels from among certificates, diplomas, associate’s degrees, bachelor’s degrees, and master’s degrees).

Institutions may add the following statement in announcing their accreditation:

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

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

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

“Accredited Member, ACICS”

An institution is not permitted to use such statements as “fully accredited” or “accredited” without including the name of ACICS. An institution will not use or publicize the term “accredited” unless it is in fact accredited by ACICS or another recognized agency, or it has affirmative authority under state law.

Any reference to stated authority for status as “registered,” “approved,” or “accredited” must include the name of the state extending the approval and must accurately identify the state agency. An applicant for ACICS accreditation may not disclose this fact in any manner.

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

B. ACCREDITATION OF INDIVIDUAL CAMPUSES

Explanation of Proposed Changes

The Council proposes to modify language in the Criteria to introduce flexibility into the accreditation process. These changes will allow the Council to award grants of different lengths to a main campus and to its additional locations. Visits to the campuses of a multiple campus institution will be scheduled prior to the end of each of their grants and therefore may not be concurrent. The structure of the grant process described in the Criteria, including the maximum length of grants and the relationship between grants, will remain the same as it is in current practice.

1-3-202. Multiple Campus Institution. A multiple campus institution is an institution that provides educational programs at one main campus and one or more additional locations. Compliance with the *Accreditation Criteria* of the main campus and its additional locations is reviewed separately ~~but concurrently~~. Accreditation is granted to the institution at the main campus, with the specific inclusion of each of the additional locations.

2-1-700 Council Actions. Action by ACICS to accredit or renew accreditation or not to do so, or to limit or otherwise condition the grant of accreditation, is

determined only following review of the self-evaluation report prepared by the applicant institution, the report of the visiting team, the response of the institution to that report, the institution's financial condition, and the recommendations (if any) of the interim reviewers. At each level of review, the number and seriousness of any deficiencies are taken into account, as well as the institution's indicated willingness and capability to overcome them. The Council may, at its discretion, direct an institution to submit a teach-out agreement, as described in [Section 2-2-303](#) of the *Accreditation Criteria*. Specific Council actions are discussed in [Title II, Chapter 3](#).

2-1-701. Maximum Length of Grants of Accreditation and Effective Dates.

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

2-1-702. Grant Lengths of Additional Locations in Multiple Campus

Institutions. The Council at its discretion may determine that the grant length and/or expiration date for an additional location will not coincide with the grant length and/or expiration date for the main campus. In the event that the main campus fails to maintain its accreditation status with ACICS, the associated additional locations and campus additions are ineligible for accreditation by ACICS.

C. DISTANCE EDUCATION

Explanation of Proposed Changes

The Council proposes to modify language in Appendix H to reflect current practices in distance education.

APPENDIX H Principles and Requirements ~~Guidelines~~ for Nontraditional Education

DISTANCE EDUCATION

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

Institutional Readiness

(a) Institutions must notify and receive approval from ACICS prior to using distance education as a mode of delivery (See Sections [2-2-501](#) and [2-2-503\(c\)\(d\)](#)).

(b) Institutions must have a plan to implement distance education instruction. At a minimum, the plan should include the rationale, resources, course/program objectives, content, and student assessment. Institutions must integrate this plan into the ~~Institutional~~ Campus Effectiveness Plan.

(b) The instructional delivery method must be appropriate for students and the curriculum.

(c) Institutional policies and procedures should be consistently applied, regardless of instructional mode of delivery.

(d) Institutions must designate a qualified individual to oversee the distance education activities. ~~Additionally, institutions must assign faculty who possess the technical skills to teach in a distance education environment.~~

Admissions Requirements and Enrollment

(a) Institutions must identify the admission requirements of distance education courses/program/s and how it differs from, if applicable, the on-ground admission requirements.

(b) If an on-line admissions test is required, it must be administered in a manner which verifies the student's identity. Institutions must make it clear in writing at the time of enrollment how the student's identity will be verified throughout the course and program, how the student's privacy will be protected, and if the student will be assessed any additional charges associated with the verification of student identity.

(c) Institutions must clearly and appropriately state any requirements the students must possess or have access to in order to access this mode of delivery.

(d) Institutions must provide an on-line orientation program to familiarize the student with the equipment, resources used in the distance education activities, and orient the student to the distance education learning process.

~~Curriculum Content and Instruction~~ and Instructional Delivery

(a) Regardless of instructional delivery method, ~~the~~ syllabi must identify the course learning objectives. Each course learning objective must support one or more program learning outcomes. ~~show that the distance education course(s)~~

~~has/have the educational learning objectives and outcomes consistent with the program objectives and the credential awarded. (See Glossary definition of [Syllabus](#).)~~

(b) ~~The course/program must demonstrate~~ provide sufficient and appropriate opportunities for interaction between faculty and students and among students (See Section 3-1-516(b)).

(c) Institutions must demonstrate to the Council that the clock or credit hours required and awarded are appropriate for the degrees and credentials offered using a thoroughly developed rationale. Credit award rationales for distance education delivery of courses or programs generally do not use the traditional lecture/laboratory/practicum formulas for credit calculations (See Section 3-1-516, Course and Program Measurement).

(d) Curriculum must be administered in a way that maintains security of access.

(e) Institutions must demonstrate that the student who registers for a distance education course or program is the same student who participates in and completes the course or program and receives the academic credit. The verification method, at the option of the institution, may include a secure login and pass code, proctored examinations, and other appropriate student authentication or verification technology.

Faculty and Instructional Support

(a) ~~The institution must employ academically and experientially credentialed faculty to teach online courses, oversee the instruction, evaluation, and grading requirements of the distance education course/program.~~

(b) ~~The faculty must possess the appropriate technical skills and be adequately trained to instruct in a distance education environment; faculty orientation must be provided. Faculty hired to facilitate online instruction must be properly trained to utilize the institution's learning management system for purposes of instruction, communication and assessment.~~

(c) ~~The faculty must be supported with the appropriate educational resources and technology to instruct using this method of delivery. Students must also be provided with the appropriate technical and academic support to successfully complete the program/course using this form of instruction. The instruction must provide an accessible and reliable learning management system and technical support to effectively facilitate online instruction and learning.~~

(d) ~~Institutions must provide evidence that there is an appropriate number of faculty for the student population involved. Institutions must be able to justify their student teacher ratio(s). The institution must demonstrate that the~~

faculty/student ratio appropriately supports faculty and student interaction, facilitation of interaction among students and facilitation of interaction among students and facilitation of interaction with curriculum content.

(e) The institution must have a faculty development plan on file that is appropriate for each individual. For further information, see Section [3-1-543](#).

Resources and Equipment

(a) The institution must demonstrate that it has adequate financial resources to support the form of delivery.

~~(b) Instructional resources, equipment, library resources, and network connectivity, if applicable, must be readily available, accessible, and reliable. The institution must demonstrate that students taking online courses have access to the same or equivalent library resources and support as students taking courses in a physical classroom.~~

Students and Student Services

~~(a) The institution must provide students with a knowledge base of technology utilization. orient online students to its learning management system, resources and support services, including technical support.~~

~~(b) Student support services available to students enrolled in online programs must be the same or equivalent to those provided to students enrolled in ground-based programs, The including but not limited to institution must provide student services such as counseling, academic advising, guidance, financial aid, and employment assistance. for students enrolled in distance education courses/programs.~~

Student Evaluation and Program Assessment

~~(a) Requirements for successful completion of distance education courses/programs must be similar to those of residential courses/programs. The course learning objectives for a course delivered online must be the same as the learning objective for the same course delivered on ground.~~

~~(b) Regardless of instructional delivery method, assessments and assignments should demonstrate student achievement of course learning objectives.~~

~~(b) Assessment of student performance and academic success should demonstrate outcomes for distance education courses/programs that are comparable to those of residential courses/programs.~~

The assessment may include a synthesis of portfolios, group work, applied writing, pre and posttesting, capstone courses, seminars, and on-line presentations (if applicable).

(c) The institution must document that it conducts course/program evaluations, including assessment of student learning outcomes, student retention and placement, and student, graduate, faculty, and employer satisfaction (See Section [3-1-111](#).)

Publications

(a) The institution must fully disclose what form(s) of instruction it uses in its catalog and web site and, when appropriate, in its advertising and promotional material. The catalog disclosure must follow the requirements as described and outlined in Section [3-1-701](#) and [Appendix C, number 22](#)).

SELF-PACED INSTRUCTION

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

Institutional Readiness

1. Institutions must notify and receive approval from ACICS prior to using self-paced as a mode of delivery. (See Sections [2-2-501](#) and [2-2-503\(c\)\(d\)](#).)
2. Institutions must demonstrate a shift from a teacher-centered to a learner-centered environment.
3. Institutions must employ faculty who possess the technical skills to teach in a self-paced environment.
4. The delivery method must be appropriate for students and the curriculum.

Admissions Requirements and Enrollment

Institutions must identify the admissions requirements of self-paced courses/programs.

Curriculum Content and Instruction and Delivery

~~1. The syllabi must show that the self-paced course(s) has/have the educational learning objectives and outcomes consistent with the program objectives and the credential awarded. Regardless of instructional delivery method, the syllabi must identify the course learning objectives. Each course learning objective must support one or more program learning outcomes. (See Glossary definition of [Syllabus](#).)~~

2. Institutions must demonstrate to the Council that the clock or credit hours required and awarded are appropriate for the degrees and credentials offered using a thoroughly developed rationale. Credit award rationales for self-paced delivery of courses or programs generally do not use the traditional lecture/laboratory/practicum formulas for credit calculations. (See Section [3-1-516](#), Course and Program Measurement.)
3. Institutions must demonstrate compliance with applicable federal and state regulations.

Faculty and Instructional Support

1. The institution must employ academically and experientially credentialed faculty to oversee the ~~instruction, evaluation, and grading requirements of the self-paced course/program.~~
2. The faculty must be adequately trained to instruct in a self-paced environment.
3. The faculty must be supported with the appropriate education resources and technology to facilitate self-paced instruction. ~~to instruct using this method of delivery.~~
4. ~~Institutions must provide evidence that there is an appropriate number of faculty for the student population involved.~~ The institution must demonstrate that the student/teacher ratio appropriately supports faculty and student interaction, facilitation of interaction among students and facilitation of student interaction with curriculum content.

Resources and Equipment

~~Instructional resources and equipment must be readily available, accessible, and reliable.~~ The institution must provide an accessible and reliable learning management system and technical support to effectively facilitate online instruction and learning.

Students and Student Services

~~The institution must provide students with a knowledge based of technology utilization.~~

- (a) The institution must orient online students to its learning management system, resources and support services, including technical support.
- (b) Student support services available to students enrolled in self-paced programs must be the same or equivalent to those provided to students enrolled in ground-based programs , including but not limited to counseling, academic advising, financial aid, and employment assistance.

Student Evaluation and Program Assessment

The institution must implement an assessment plan that measures attainment of core competencies for the course/program and measurable objectives for each course.

(a) The course learning objectives for a self-paced course must be the same as the learning objectives for the same course delivered on ground.

(b) Regardless of instructional delivery method, assessments and assignments should demonstrate student achievement of course learning objectives.

Publications

The institution must fully disclose what form(s) of instruction it uses in its catalog and web site and, when appropriate, in its advertising and promotional material. The catalog disclosure must follow the requirements as described and outlined in Section [3-1-701](#) and [Appendix C, number 22](#).

D. ACCREDITATION OF INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

Explanation of Proposed Changes

The Council proposes to modify language in several areas of the Criteria to address international institutions that seek an accreditation status with ACICS.

3-1-541. Faculty Preparation. Preparation of faculty members shall be academically and experientially appropriate to the subject matter they teach. Faculty members shall be competent to teach the subject matter offered and shall have reasonable latitude in their choice of teaching methods. U.S. based institutions must provide evidence that all faculty members are graduates of institutions accredited by agencies recognized by the United States Department of Education. Faculty who are graduates from institutions outside the United States must be graduates of institutions recognized by their respective governments as institutions of higher education or ~~and~~ be evaluated by a member of the Association of International Credentials Evaluators (AICE) or the National Association of Credential Evaluation Services (NACES) to determine the equivalency of the credentials awarded by institutions in the United States. ~~and~~ ~~their~~ Transcripts, in languages other than English, must be translated into English.

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.~~

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

~~Each of these requirements must be strictly observed:~~

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

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

5. The institution has provisions for an evaluation point at least by the end of each academic year (or at 50% of the normal program length if the program is one academic year or less) that determine whether the student has met the qualitative and quantitative components of the standards.

6. The institution has provisions for utilizing and publishing a schedule designating the minimum percentage or amount of work that a student must successfully complete at the end of each increment to complete the educational program within the maximum time frame.

7. The institution has provisions for determining at the end of each increment whether the student has met the qualitative and quantitative components of the standards. The qualitative and quantitative standards must be cumulative and must include all periods of the student's enrollment regardless of whether or not the student receives federal financial aid.

8. The institution's policies define the effect on satisfactory academic progress of course withdrawals, incomplete grades, repeated courses, and non-punitive grades. The institution's policies define the effect of non-credit or remedial courses on satisfactory academic progress.

9. The institution has provisions for an evaluation at the end of the second academic year and at the end of each subsequent academic year(s) where the student must have a minimum cumulative grade point average (CGPA) of 2.0 on a scale of 4.0, C, or its equivalent, or has academic standing consistent with the institution's requirements for graduation. A student receiving federal financial aid who does not meet the CGPA standards at the end of the second year will no longer be eligible for financial aid, may not be placed on probation, and must be dismissed, unless the student wishes to continue without being eligible for federal financial aid. However, a student not meeting the CGPA standards at the end of the second year may remain as an enrolled student who is eligible for federal financial aid if there are documented mitigating circumstances (i.e., death in the family, sickness of the student, etc.).

10. If the institution places students on warning, or on probation, as defined in sections 11 and 12 below, the institution's policy must describe these statuses.

11. An institution that evaluates academic progress at the end of each payment period may assign warning status to a student who fails to make satisfactory academic progress. A student may be assigned to warning status without an appeal or other action by the student. For institutions awarding U.S. Department of Education Federal Financial Aid, a student on warning may continue to receive assistance under federal financial aid programs for one payment period despite a determination that the student is not making satisfactory academic progress.

12. The institution must have an appeal process for students who do not meet the requirements of the institution's satisfactory academic progress policy. When an institution grants a student's appeal for mitigating circumstances, the student will be placed on probation for a specified period of time and considered to be making regular satisfactory progress. ~~the student's eligibility for financial aid will be reinstated.~~ 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. A student placed in an extended enrollment status is not eligible for financial aid.~~

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 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.

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

13. The institution must have clearly defined procedures for re-establishing satisfactory academic progress.

14. The institution has rules for students who change programs, as well as for students who seek to earn additional credentials. For instance, an institution may have a policy that for a student who changes programs it will include in the determination of a student's satisfactory academic progress standing the credits attempted and grades earned that count toward the student's new program of study. Such a policy must be part of the institution's written policy.

15. The institution must have a policy that addresses the implications of transfer of credit on satisfactory academic progress.

16. The institution has provisions that the student must have a minimum CGPA of 2.0, C, for undergraduate programs and 3.0, B for graduate programs or their equivalent upon graduation ~~from all programs~~.

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

(a) The requirements for students admitted to programs leading to a certificate, diploma, or degree shall include graduation from high school or its equivalent, or demonstration of the student's ability to complete the program, as provided for by governing laws ~~ability to benefit from the training offered. Such ability to benefit determination shall include, at a minimum, the administration of a test approved by the U.S. Department of Education and academic and career advising.~~

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

3-1-515. Specialized Accreditation. If a program is accredited by a specialized accreditor recognized by the U.S. Department of Education, or the Council for Higher Education Accreditation or, for foreign institutions, the government or appropriately recognized organization providing specialized accreditation, the Chief Executive Officer of the institution shall attest to ACICS and provide documentation that it is in compliance with the standards of the specialized accreditor.

3-4-400 – Library, Instructional Resources, and Technology

3-4-401. Staff. A professionally trained individual shall supervise and manage library and instructional resources, facilitate their integration into all phases of the institution's curricular and educational offerings, and assist students in their use. A professionally trained individual is one who holds a bachelor's or master's degree in library or information science or a comparable program, or state certification to work as a librarian, where applicable, or, for foreign institutions, who holds a bachelor's or master's degree recognized as appropriate for the position by its government or higher education authority. The institution must provide evidence that the degree is from an institution accredited by an agency recognized by the United States Department of Education. If the degree is from an institution outside of the United States, the institution must be recognized by its government as an institution of higher education or ~~and the transcript must be translated into English and~~ be evaluated by a member of the Association of

International Credentials Evaluators (AICE) or the National Association of Credential Evaluation Services (NACES) to determine the equivalency of the degree to degrees awarded by institutions in the United States. Transcripts, in languages other than English, must be translated into English.

3-5-400 – Library, Instructional Resources, and Technology

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

3-6-700 – Library, Instructional Resources, and Technology

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

3-7-700 – Library, Instructional Resources, and Technology

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

E. GENERAL EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS

Explanation of Proposed Changes

The Council proposes to modify language in the Criteria to appropriately address education requirements for occupational associate's degree programs.

INTRODUCTION

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

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

There shall be a minimum of 10 semester hours, 15 quarter hours, and a maximum of 15 semester hours, 22.5 quarter hours, or their equivalent in general education or applied general education courses. The catalog must identify the courses that satisfy the general education requirements, and it must provide an explanation of the course numbering system.

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

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.

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 Frazier sfrazier@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.

C. 2013 WORKSHOP SCHEDULE

RENEWAL ACCREDITATION WORKSHOP		
Renewal Accreditation Workshop	May 31, 2013	Portland, OR
Renewal Accreditation Workshop	August 28, 2013	ACICS Office
Renewal Accreditation Workshop	August 30, 2013	ACICS Office
Renewal Accreditation Workshop	October 8, 2013	Pasadena, CA
Renewal Accreditation Workshop	October 24, 2013	Indiana
CEP/CAR WORKSHOP		
CEP/CAR Workshop	August 29, 2013	ACICS Office
EVALUATOR WEBINAR		
Evaluator Webinar	May 31, 2013	On-Line
Evaluator Webinar	July 26, 2013	On-Line
Evaluator Webinar	September 27, 2013	On-Line
INITIAL ACCREDITATION WORKSHOP		
Initial Accreditation Workshop	February 27, 2013	ACICS Office
Initial Accreditation Workshop	June 4, 2013	Orlando, FL
Initial Accreditation Workshop	October 7, 2013	Pasadena, CA

D. PUBLIC COMMENT

The Council encourages institutions to provide feedback regarding Council operations and procedures. Comments on the proposed *Criteria* revisions are due by **Friday, July 12, 2013**.

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 gdean@acics.org and let him know the source of the information and when it appeared.

F. ACICS AWARE WEBINARS

The AWARE webinar will be held on **Friday, May 17, 2013**. 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 King at tking@acics.org.

G. PLACEMENT VERIFICATION PROGRAM

The Council continued its discussion of the process for verification of job placement data reported to ACICS by member institutions. After considering a variety of options for conducting verification, the Council decided to utilize ACICS staff resources, at least for the first phase of this program. Therefore, ACICS will not pursue the identification of approved or preferred contractors for placement verification.

ACICS will continue to encourage institutions to verify their placement data by their own means. This may include the use of outside contractors by some. However, the independent ACICS placement verification program will be performed by a new verification unit to be developed within ACICS. With the assistance of a member advisory committee, this performance audit group will establish data submission formats and protocols; define appropriate frequency and intervals for independent verification of each campus' CAR data; set procedures for reconciling differences between submitted and verified placement data, and integrating site-visit verification of back-up documentation with the independent performance audit. More details on the performance auditing program will be conveyed in the near future.

H. MITIGATING CIRCUMSTANCES FOR STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

The Council reviewed and approved a set of mitigating circumstances that will be considered when applying student achievement standards to campus and program retention rates, placement rates, and licensure pass rates, beginning with the 2013 Campus Accountability Report (CAR). Campuses may submit information in response to questions in the 2013 CAR and CAR Addendum for licensure pass rates about circumstances under which they believe the campus should be granted a waiver from a student achievement standard. The campus or program must also upload documentation, as directed, including an improvement plan addressing the specific circumstance and, for any subsequent submissions, demonstrating

continuous improvement. These circumstances apply to the compliance standards at both the campus and program levels, and they include the following:

1. Retention Waiver – A waiver from the Retention Compliance Standard will be considered for any campus or program which can demonstrate that more than 50% of total enrollment during the CAR reporting period demonstrates at least three of the following traits:
 - a. Delayed enrollment after high school graduation (at least 25 years old)
 - b. Lacking a high school diploma (admission with a GED or ATB)
 - c. Enrolling on a part-time basis
 - d. Financially independent
 - e. Working full-time (at least 35 hours) while enrolled
 - f. Having dependents (usually children younger than age 19), and
 - g. Being a single parent.
2. Retention Waiver – A waiver from the Retention Compliance Standard will be considered for any campus or program which can demonstrate that the students who withdrew during the reporting period ending June 30 and returned to the campus or program on or before November 1, would have raised the retention rate above the compliance standard if they had not been counted as withdrawals.
3. Placement Waiver - A waiver from the Placement Compliance Standard will be considered for any campus or program which can demonstrate that 30% or more of its graduates reported in the CAR had less than six months between the date of their graduation or the receipt of a license required for employment and the reporting date for placements of November 1. In addition, the improvement plan for any subsequent year's submission must document that the placement of all students from the previous year is above the ACICS compliance standard.
4. Licensure Pass Rate Waiver – The Council is still considering adjustments in the definition of the licensure pass rate data and standard, so no waiver is proposed at this time for any specific mitigating circumstance. Institutions may request that a waiver from the Licensure Pass Rate Standard be considered based upon other mitigating circumstances, as described in paragraph 7 below.
5. Retention, Placement, or Licensure Pass Rate Waiver – A waiver from the Retention, Placement, or Licensure Pass Rate Compliance Standard will be considered for any campus or program which can demonstrate that the three-year average, weighted for enrollment, of the retention, placement or licensure pass rate is above the corresponding compliance standard.
6. Retention, Placement, or Licensure Pass Rate Waiver – A waiver from the Retention, Placement, or Licensure Pass Rate Compliance Standard will be

considered for any campus or program which can demonstrate that it is separately accredited by a specialized, programmatic accreditor recognized by the U.S. Department of Education and that the accreditor has its own standard for retention (or completion or graduation), placement (or employment), or licensure pass rate.

7. Other Mitigating Circumstance – A waiver from the Retention, Placement, or Licensure Pass Rate Compliance Standard will be considered for any campus or program which can demonstrate that some other circumstance over which the administration has no control has brought the respective student achievement rate below the ACICS compliance standard.

8. Sufficiency of Service – For campuses submitting the same mitigating circumstance for more than one year, the campus must demonstrate that its operating budget ratios fall within one standard deviation of the average (mean) value of these ratios for other ACICS-accredited institutions in the same range of educational revenues. If a ratio falls outside of one standard deviation from the mean, the campus must explain why the resources devoted to this service should be considered sufficient. These operating ratios include
 - a. Instructional salaries
 - b. Instructional expenses
 - c. Student recruitment
 - d. Depreciation of equipment
 - e. Occupancy expense
 - f. Administrative expense
 - g. Student personnel services

IV. COMMENT FORM – PROPOSED CRITERIA REVISIONS

ACICS ID Code: _____ Date: _____

Name of Organization: _____

Address : _____

Please check (as appropriate):

Proposed *Accreditation Criteria* revisions:

- Catalog- Appendix C
[] Accept as Written [] Modify (please explain)
- Accreditation of Individual Campuses
[] Accept as Written [] Modify (please explain)
- Distance Education- Appendix H
[] Accept as Written [] Modify (please explain)
- Accreditation of International Institutions
[] Accept as Written [] Modify (please explain)
- General Education Requirements
[] Accept as Written [] Modify (please explain)

Prepared by: _____

Title: _____

Signature: _____

Please respond by Friday, July 12, 2013 to:

Ms. Terron King
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