TheEvaluator Accrediting Council for Independent Colleges and Schools Volume VI Issue IV Fall 2013

For Your Information

Below are items to be published in the September 2013 Memorandum to the Field and which will be available on our Web site for your review.

INSTITUTIONAL PUBLICATIONS (Appendix C)

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

Reviewed by staff

NONTRADITIONAL EDUCATION (Appendix H)

The Council finalized modifying language in Appendix H to reflect current practices in distance education.

Reviewed by the DE expert with contribution from the team chair (CEP) and Educational Activities (Faculty).

GENERAL EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS (Section 3-3-302)

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

Reviewed by the Educational Activities expert.

ACCREDITATION STAND-ARDS FOR INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

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

§ Sections 2-1-403 & 3-1-515: Specialized Accreditation

§ Section 3-1-541: Faculty Preparation

§ Section 3-1-421 & Appendix D: Standards of Satisfactory Progress

§ Sections 3-4-400, 3-5-400, 3-6-700, and 3-7-700: Library, Instructional Resources, and Technology

Only for review of international institutions.

ACCREDITATION OF INDIVIDUAL CAMPUSES

The Council finalized 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 large multi-campus institution will be scheduled prior to the end of their grants. However, not all the visits may be in the same cycle. The structure of the grant process described in the Criteria, including the maximum length of grants, will remain the same as it is in current practice.

Evaluators are responsible for staying current and abreast with the changes in Criteria.

Please review the most current Memorandum to the Field on the web site:
Home > Council Actions > Memorandum to the Field

Participation in the free AWARE Webinars is also highly recommended.

Message from the Evaluator Manager

Hello Everyone!

I trust your summer was well-spent—working hard, playing hard, and enjoying life along the way.

We have started the last cycle of the year and as always, there is a lot to do and a lot to learn.

ACICS has responded to the concerns of many evaluators who would love to participate in visits but unable to manage the high initial cost of airfare. Use of the Concur system is required and the training information is included in this newsletter for your information. Additional reminders on visit procedures need to be reiterated as a result of the assessment and feedback from the field.

The evaluator pool now exceeds 1500 evaluators and we must all work together to ensure quality in the service to the Accreditation process.

Thank you, as always, for your dedicated service to ACICS!

Report Templates and Writing Guidelines

New report templates for the full team report (Additional Location Inclusion, Initial Grant, and New Grant) that reflect the new changes in the *Accreditation Criteria* and the addition of appropriate questions, have been uploaded to the Report Templates page on the ACICS Web site. Evaluators are responsible for downloading this version prior to **each** team visit to ensure that the current report is being used for the evaluation.

Significant changes have been made to the following templates:

- Section 7—Publications
- Section 10—Distance Education
- Section 12—ESL Program Review*

*The ESL template is new and will be piloted this cycle to determine what additional changes need to be made.



The Report Writing and Editing Guidelines 2013, along with other materials, can be found on the Report Templates web page and evaluators are expected to follow them. Consistent non-compliance with the writing expectations may result in visit assignment restrictions or other action.

Evaluator Recruitment—Your Continued Help

We continue to solicit evaluators reaching out to colleagues in their professional associations, organizations, and networks to encourage participation in the ACICS evaluator process. Share my email address, pwgilliam@acics.org, and I will gladly follow up. We have an urgent need in the following areas:

Wind Turbine Technician
Computer Technician
Solar/Wind/Renewable Energy Tech
Environmental Technology
HVAC/Electrician
Machine Tool Technology/Machinist
Animal and Equine Science
Electrocardiograph Technician
Medical Laboratory Technician
Divinity/Biblical Studies
Golf Complex Operations/Management
Nursing Education
Electrocardiograph Technology

Occupational Therapy Assistant
Physical Therapy Assistant
Cardiovascular Sonography
Respiratory Therapy
Dental Assisting/Hygiene
Anesthesia Technology
Gerontology Assistant
Dialysis Technology
Building/Property Maintenance and
Management
Health and Fitness Specialist
Funeral Service and Mortuary Sci-

If you are not currently approved to evaluate any of the above areas but believe you have the required academic and experiential qualifications, please forward an updated resume with a note to evaluatormanager@acics.org for additional review.

If you know of professionals in the above fields who would be interested in serving or would be very effective in serving, please encourage them to apply by visiting http://www.acics.org/evaluators.

New Travel Team Member — Russie Allen



I am extremely excited to be one of the newest members on the ACICS travel team as an accreditation coordinator!

I have worked for quite a few schools that are accredited by ACICS. During that time, I expressed interest in being behind the scenes and wanting to know more about accreditation and the process of becoming accredited as I have always known the importance of it.

I was able to eventually transition into accreditation over time!

I have had the pleasure of working with some awesome evaluators during my observation visit with my manager and I look forward to meeting and working with more of you — whom I know I will be able to learn a lot from.

Calling for Team Chair Applications!

A critical part of the evaluation team, the ACICS team chair is tasked with providing leadership to the independent evaluation team during an institutional evaluation for reaccreditation, branch inclusion or initial accreditation. The application has been revised to include active involvement in the development, review and monitoring of the campus effectiveness plan.

Applications are now being accepted and reviewed on a continuous basis until September 30th. Late applications will not be considered. Applicants will be notified, via email, of the status of their application.

Please visit

http://www.acics.org/evaluators/content.aspx?id=4519 for more information and to access the application packet.

Concur Travel & Expense Process

In an effort to address the rising cost of airline tickets and the up-front financial burden placed on evaluators, ACICS is utilizing the Concur Travel and Expense System to manage and cover this cost for all team members, using an ACICS Corporate Account. Key elements:

- Use of the system is MANDATORY for airfare/train reservations.
- Evaluator profiles MUST be completed prior to using the system to include frequent flier numbers, etc. so that miles may be credited to the evaluator's personal frequent filer account.
- Legal name, as listed on license and/or passport must be in Personify. To correct, please send an email to pwgilliam@acics.org
- Do not add any credit cards to your profile. This will limit the payment options to only the corporate account and avoid errors.
- Tickets in excess of \$1000 will not be processed and purchase will be suspended until approval is received by the staff coordinator.

Flight Arrangements - Changing or Canceling

- Flight changes are available for e-tickets that include a single carrier.
- If the trip is already ticketed but has not occurred, you can change the time and/or date of the flight. Your change options will be with the same airline and routing.
- If the trip cannot be completed, for whatever reason, ACICS (staff coordinator) MUST be notified immediately. The unused ticket will be the property of ACICS and cannot be used by the evaluator for personal travel. This will constitute a breach of the Canons of Ethical Behavior and subject to negative action.

Flight Arrangements - Assistance

Travel Incorporated 4301 Anchor Plaza Pkwy Suite 125 Tampa, FL 33634 Phone: 866-738-6444

Expensing

 On the My Concur page, in the Expense Report column of the Trip List section, click the button for the appropriate trip.

Critical Do's and Don'ts

Do select "American Express Air Travel" for airfare and train

Do review the expense report for accuracy and completion (corporate or "out-of-pocket") prior to submission

Do modify search options to access a larger flight selection.

Do contact ACICS if you have any questions or concerns during the process.

Do get approval to purchase airfare in excess of \$1000.

Do create an expense report for each transportation reservation independent of your out-of-pocket expenses.

Do not select "American Express Air Travel" for other expenses – be sure to select "Out of Pocket", including honorarium

Do not include your personal credit card in your Profile.

Expensing Reminders

Expenses **MUST** be itemized and submitted using the Concur expense reimbursement tool. Access to Concur is obtained by logging on through ACICS and clicking LINK TO CONCUR.

It is also strongly recommended that evaluators set up **Direct Deposit** to expedite the reimbursement process. Forms are available on the web site.

Failure to provide adequate documentation of expenses will void ACICS' reimbursement responsibilities.



Evaluator Visit Procedures & Reminders

Revisions, changes and new evaluator policies have been periodically communicated through the newsletter and, as such, may not have been reviewed by everyone. In the spirit of full disclosure and mutual respect for the evaluators' contribution to the process, below is a summary of some key items. Your cooperation and adherence are appreciated.

Visit Solicitation

The objective, expert role of the evaluators cannot be understated and is a pillar of the peer review process. ACICS prides itself on utilizing individuals who reflect the highest professional standards in an unbiased manner to channel quality assurance and enhancement in the accreditation process. In order to do this, we have developed a system that allows for a team composition process that is uncompromised. Hence, evaluators should not contact ACICS to solicit visits or communicate availability. This policy will be fully implemented in 2013 and your adherence is expected. Possible action may include warning, limited visit participation, and removal from the active pool.

************* Visit Participation Limit

Additionally, the six-visit limit is still in effect and travel staff will need to request, for approval, the waiving of this limit in extenuating, emergency situations. **Evaluators should not request**

that they be allowed to conduct additional visits but they are responsible for communicating when they have reached the limit.

Life happens—and no one appreciates that more than the travel staff. However, communication, on both sides, is critical when it does to allow for the evaluation process to continue.

- Email/Call/Text the staff as soon as your availability changes.
- If you do not get confirmation from that staff, send an email to pwgilliam@acics.org
- If possible, help find a replacement for your assignment (colleague, contact, etc.) in consultation with the ACICS staff

Pre-Travel Meeting Requirement

The institutional evaluation formally begins at the pre-visit meeting. It is at this meeting that the initial team formation takes place. Team members get introduced and camaraderie established as the "goal" of being a key playing in the accreditation process takes hold. In addition, the team chair facilitates the initial review of the institution and any issues that may have been found on initial review of the institutional materials. Ab-

sence is only excusable if approved by the staff/team chair. Habitual absence from the meeting will be noted in the evaluations and could result in loss of visit participation.

********** Professional Attire

The evaluation visit is a professional activity and requires professionalism in all respects. The appearance of the team, as individuals and a whole, is the first impression to be had of ACICS. Hence, all team members should present themselves accordingly. Men should wear a jacket and tie, with dress shoes and socks; ladies should wear dresses, suits, or pant suits. Jeans (anything), sandals, and recreational or casual attire are inappropriate.

************* Contact Information

Communication between the evaluators and ACICS is the channel that ensures that the evaluation process takes place. Most team composition requests are made via email instead of the phone. Hence, changes in employment, and mailing address must be shared with the evaluator manager@acics.org and instchange@acics.org. Evaluators should however, log into their account to update their contact information, to include email.

Program Specialist Focus Group

ACICS is in the process of developing procedures for the Placement Verification Program and how it affects the placement verification process during team visits. As the facilitators of the on-site verification program, your feedback is a critical component of the review process and we need to hear from you.

Hence, if you are interested in participating in a focus group, please email pwgilliam@acics.org with "Program Specialist Focus Group Interest" in the subject field. Interest must be communicated **no later than September 19, 2013.** Given the nature of the review, the group may participate electronically by survey or questionnaire. Thank you in advance for responding!

Notice of New Evaluator Requirement

Licensure and certification requirements provide validation of competency and skills assessment needed to work in a number of fields. Our institutions offer a number of these programs and the evaluation process should include similarly credentialed experts.

Hence, starting in 2014, experts of programs which require licensure, certification, or registration (federal or state), must hold an active/current license, certification, or registration. Current evaluators must email a copy of the documentation to evaluatormanager@acics.org. This document will be kept current and will be added to the evaluators record.

Evaluator Training Update

In the Spring 2013 publication, evaluators were informed of plans underway to develop refresher training courses on the overall, and more efficient, evaluator responsibilities as well as focused training for each role (relations with students, educational activities, team leads).

All active evaluators, with working email accounts, were recently sent out an *Evaluator Assessment* by MindFlash. This assessment, as detailed in the preceding email communication, is required by all active evaluators and was designed to assess the understanding of fundamental evaluation processes, including reimbursement procedures, agency activities, and visits. There are no course materials to review prior to taking the assessment as the intent is to determine knowledge of current practices.

Evaluators who failed to achieve the 80% passing score are enrolled in the *Accreditation Evaluation Fundamentals* course.

This course covers all the fundamental elements of the ACICS accreditation review process and includes examples to emphasize critical areas. The Assessment quiz is then retaken with a target 80% passing grade.

Those evaluators who failed both courses are required to take a live webinar prior to being available for team selection.

Progress Report:

ASSESSMENT	FUNDAMENTALS
# Sent = 1500	# Sent = 255
# Completed = 761	# Completed = 170
# Passed = 484	# Passed = 138
# Failed = 255	# Failed = 25
# 100% = 15	# 100% = 5
Average score = 81%	Average score = 86%

The purpose of the *Assessment* was not punitive or to remove evaluators from the

pool but rather to be a baseline to measure the success of training and need for additional training

Feedback indicates that the course provided a good refresher and a reminder that practice may differ from the actual process.

Completion of the assessment is required and those evaluators who missed the deadline, or did not receive the training (spammed or email incorrect) should contact Ms. Perliter Walters-Gilliam (pwgilliam@acics.org) for another opportunity to take the quiz.

Future training will be communicated in the same manner and it is critical that all evaluators maintain a working email account to ensure that they receive any communication from ACICS.

Upcoming Training Plans

During the past month, two focus groups convened to discuss a number of evaluation-related items:

- The Student Relations (SR) group focused on the various methods currently being employed by the SR experts with varying level of success. Hence, the need for consistency in training/review has been identified.
- The team lead (Chair) group focused on overall visit management, ACICS directives, and the CEP. Being a much smaller group, identified issues will be communicated directly to all chairs.

In addition to the feedback received from above, travel staff provided perspective on the areas in which teams may struggle during the review process.

Hence, the following training modules are currently being developed for distribution and implementation:

Evaluating the Campus Effectiveness Plan (CEP)—for active team chairs to bring consistency to this very important area of institutional effectiveness.



- Expectations and Guidelines for Team Chairs.
- ♦ SR Expertise Assessment
- Student Relations Expertise Training
- ♦ Evaluating the Out-of-Class activities

Recommendations and suggestions for training are welcomed!

The Evaluator staff thanks all those who provide editorial and contextual feedback. The Evaluator is managed by Ms. Perliter Walters-Gilliam. Any questions or concerns about the publication may be directed to pwgilliam@acics.org.