

TITLE III EVALUATION STANDARDS

Chapter 2 Standards For Nondegree Programs

INTRODUCTION

In addition to the general standards in Chapter 1, which apply to all institutions, the following standards apply specifically to nondegree programs.

3-2-100 – FACULTY

Teaching hours, assignments, and schedules will vary from field to field and from institution to institution but should in all cases allow time for adequate preparation and professional development. The institution shall devise a plan for the efficient use of faculty competence and time, including student-teacher ratios, number of teacher preparations, and number of teaching hours. Reasonableness may be defined by, but is not restricted to, the following expectations.

3-2-101. *Teaching Load.* An instructor's teaching load, including night school, shall not exceed 32 clock hours per week, except that an overload of not more than one subject per term for additional compensation is permitted. Teaching loads may differ when using alternative methods of instruction and must be commensurate with the type of delivery method utilized. For purposes of this calculation, assigned courses offered by nontraditional or distance learning modes of instruction are deemed to consist of one clock hour per week for each unit of academic credit awarded.

3-2-102. *Field Preparation.* Assignments requiring more than three preparations in different fields (e.g., secretarial studies, business administration, data processing) shall not be given to an instructor during one academic term.

3-2-103. *Subject Preparation.* Not more than five preparations in different subjects within the same field (e.g., Accounting I, Accounting II, Keyboarding I, Business Mathematics, Business Law) shall be assigned to an instructor during one academic term.

3-2-104. *Assignments.* The requirements for full- and part-time faculty members teaching in the referenced subject areas are as follows:

- (a) A bachelor's degree and appropriate coursework in the assigned subject are required for faculty members teaching general education and other academic courses.
- (b) A bachelor's degree is required for faculty members teaching business and business administration courses. If the bachelor's degree is not in the assigned teaching field, at least two years of related work experience or evidence of specialized training or competency in the assigned teaching field is required. The burden is on the institution to demonstrate and justify the qualifications of the faculty to teach their assigned courses.
- (c) Faculty members teaching courses not referenced above must demonstrate competency in the assigned teaching field, such as academic or vocational training and credentials, related work experience, licensure, or certification. The burden is on the institution to demonstrate and justify the qualifications of the faculty to teach their assigned courses.

3-2-105. *Stability.* There shall be an adequate core of full- and/or part-time faculty to ensure sound direction and continuity of development for the educational programs. The institution shall demonstrate through outcomes, length of service, reasonable retention of faculty, and other measures that the core faculty ensures that the institution will meet its stated mission and objectives. The institution shall promote stability in the faculty through compensation, fringe benefits, professional growth opportunities, and other incentives.

3-2-106. *Student-Teacher Ratio.* The student-teacher ratio shall be reasonable at all times in keeping with generally accepted delivery modes and course content. In determining a reasonable ratio, the institution shall consider the following factors:

- (a) the amount of lecture given by instructors in skills-building and practice classes;
- (b) the level of existing skills of the students;
- (c) the amount of direct supervision exercised by the instructor and the availability of instructional equipment in a lab setting where there is primary instruction in a specific skill; and
- (d) the use of technology in providing alternative instruction or evaluation.

3-2-200 – INSTRUCTIONAL RESOURCES, MATERIALS

The instructional resources, audiovisual teaching equipment, and instructional materials shall be adequate to serve the needs of the institution's educational programs. The resources shall include current titles, periodicals, professional journals, or full-text online resources appropriate for the institution's educational programs. There shall be evidence that appropriate instructional resources, equipment, technology, and materials are utilized to support the educational objectives.

3-2-201. *References.* The institution shall have available and easily accessible to faculty and students standard reference works appropriate to the curriculum. Major consideration will be given to the variety of volumes, periodicals, online resources and information technology readily available to students and faculty, recency of publications, appropriateness, and relevance to the programs.

3-2-202. *Distribution of Resources and Materials.* The instructional resources and references may be consolidated or may be distributed throughout the educational facility, or they may be provided by the institution under contract with an external organization on behalf of its student body which ensures access to library resources and references pertinent to the programs offered by the institution; including resources that are available exclusively online. Easy access to and use of reference materials, periodicals, and information technology are of prime importance in determining if the institution is meeting the educational needs of its students and faculty. Availability and utilization of audiovisual equipment also are important.

3-2-203. *Inventory.* A current inventory of instructional materials and equipment shall be maintained by the institution.

3-2-204. *Budget.* Budget allocations and expenditures for instructional resources, equipment, and materials shall be sufficient to meet the needs and fulfill objectives of the institution's programs.

TITLE III EVALUATION STANDARDS

Chapter 3 Standards 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 15 semester hours, 22.5 quarter hours, or the equivalent of general education.

3-3-100 – STATE AUTHORITY

The institution must be legally authorized by the appropriate state education agency, where such authority exists, to confer the associate's degree.

3-3-200 – EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES

3-3-201. Objectives. The objectives of an occupational associate's degree program are an extension of the institution's awareness of its mission and its application to its constituencies. An institution applying for the inclusion of an occupational associate's degree program shall demonstrate that its programs and courses are appropriate to its mission and to its specific goals and objectives.

Occupational associate's degree programs should emphasize both achievement of vocational objectives and general education. This emphasis requires courses in general education that are relevant both quantitatively and qualitatively to the chosen degree.

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, 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.

3-3-203. Curriculum. The curriculum shall quantitatively and qualitatively approximate the standards at other institutions offering occupational associate's degrees, with due allowance for meeting special objectives. The primary purpose of the degree shall be technical in nature with courses designed to assist students in the application of these skills in the workplace. Instructional procedures, texts, materials, and technology shall be appropriate to the purposes, curriculums, and standards of institutions offering occupational associate's degrees. Evidence shall be provided that curricular offerings require appropriate use of library resources.

3-3-204. Enrollment. Enrollment in the second year of a two-year program must be sufficient to support regularly scheduled classes and laboratory work. Second-year work shall be based upon appropriate first-year prerequisites.

3-3-300 – FACULTY

3-3-301. Preparation. An institution offering occupational associate's degrees shall have an adequate and competent faculty working under conditions that encourage the best efforts of each individual. In judging competence, consideration shall be given to the academic preparation and experience of each instructor.

3-3-302. Assignments. During any academic term, a faculty member shall not be assigned to teach in more than three fields of instruction (e.g., medical assisting, business administration, information technology). Not more than five preparations in different subjects (e.g., Accounting I, Accounting II, Keyboarding I, Business Mathematics, and Business Law) shall be assigned to an instructor during one academic term. Instructors shall be assigned based on their major and minor academic preparation and/or related experience. The size of the faculty shall be appropriate to the total student enrollment.

The requirements for full- and part-time faculty members teaching in the referenced subject areas are as follows:

- (a) A bachelor's degree and appropriate coursework in the assigned subject are required for faculty members teaching applied general education. Instructors at a minimum shall have earned 15 semester or equivalent hours of coursework through a combination of hours from associate's, bachelor's, and/or master's level coursework in the area of their teaching assignment.
- (b) Instructors teaching general education shall hold a minimum of a master's degree. Instructors shall have a minimum of 18 semester or equivalent hours of coursework in their teaching discipline. At internationally based institutions, transcripts in languages other than English for general education instructors must be translated into English.

Instructors teaching courses other than general education shall hold bachelor's degrees at a minimum and shall be assigned based on their major and minor academic preparation and/or related experience. However, exceptions to the bachelor's degree requirement may be justified for instructors who have demonstrable current exceptional professional level experience in the assigned field, such as documented coursework in the field, professional certification(s), letters of recommendation or attestations from previous employer(s), letters attesting to this expertise from professional peers not connected to the college, real examples of previous success in the field such as published work, juried exhibits and shows, evidence of a professional portfolio accepted by the college and available for review, and other significant documented experience relevant to the courses to be taught. Minors or related degrees could be considered but will not be the sole determining factor. Duration of time associated with this alternative justification is dependent on the quality and significance of the work experience. The institution must be able to justify the assignment of any instructor who does not hold a bachelor's degree in the assigned teaching field.

- (c) A bachelor's degree is required for faculty members teaching business and business administration courses. If the bachelor's degree is not in the assigned teaching field, at least two years of related work experience or evidence of specialized training or competency in the assigned teaching field is required. The burden is on the institution to demonstrate and justify the qualifications of the faculty to teach their assigned courses.
- (d) Faculty members teaching courses not referenced above must demonstrate competency in the assigned teaching field, such as academic or vocational training and credentials, related work experience, licensure, or certification. The burden is on the institution to demonstrate and justify the qualifications of the faculty to teach their assigned courses.

3-3-303. Teaching Load. An instructor's teaching load, including night school, shall not exceed 32 clock hours per week, except that an overload of not more than one subject per term for additional compensation is permitted. Teaching loads may differ when using alternative methods of instruction and must be commensurate with the type of delivery method utilized. For purposes of this calculation, assigned courses offered by nontraditional or distance learning modes of instruction are deemed to consist of one clock hour per week for each unit of academic credit awarded.

3-3-304. Stability. There shall be an adequate core of full- and part-time faculty to ensure sound direction and continuity of development for the educational programs. The institution shall demonstrate through outcomes, length of service, reasonable retention of faculty, and other measures that the core faculty ensures that the institution will meet its stated mission and objectives. The institution shall promote stability in the faculty through compensation, fringe benefits, professional growth opportunities, and other incentives.

3-3-305. Student-Teacher Ratio. The student-teacher ratio shall be reasonable at all times in keeping with generally accepted delivery modes and course content. In determining a reasonable ratio, the institution shall consider the following factors:

- (a) the amount of lecture given by instructors in skills-building and practice classes;
- (b) the level of existing skills of the students;
- (c) the amount of direct supervision exercised by the instructor and the availability of instructional equipment in a lab setting where there is primary instruction in a specific skill; and
- (d) the use of technology in providing alternative instruction or evaluation.

3-3-400 – LIBRARY, INSTRUCTIONAL RESOURCES, AND TECHNOLOGY

3-3-401. Staff. An individual with the ability to maintain the resources and to assist students and faculty shall be designated to oversee the resources of the institution.

3-3-402. Budget. An annual library budget, appropriate to the size and scope of the institution and the programs offered, shall be established and the allocation expended for the purchase of books, periodicals, library equipment, and other resource and reference materials.

3-3-403. Function. The library function is shaped by the educational programs of the institution. Appropriate reference, research, and information resources must be made available to enhance, augment, and support the curricular and educational offerings. The resources shall include the study, reading, and information technology facilities necessary to make the educational programs effective. The ultimate test of the library's adequacy is determined by the extent to which its resources support all the courses offered by the institutions.

3-3-404. Use and Accessibility. In evaluating the use of library resources by students, consideration shall be given to accessibility and to methods used by the faculty to encourage the use of these resources by students. Records of physical and/or online circulation and inventory shall be current and accurate.

Physical and/or online library materials and services must be available at times consistent with the typical student's schedule in both day and evening programs. Easy access to and use of reference materials, periodicals, and information technology are of prime importance in determining if the institution is meeting the educational needs of its students and faculty. If online resources are utilized, an appropriate number of terminals shall be provided for student

use. Interlibrary agreements are not substitutes for an institution's library, but rather a means to supplement the institution's holdings in limited areas. In determining the appropriateness of such agreements, consideration will be given to the uniqueness of the lending library's collection, provisions for interlibrary loans, and the degree of accessibility to the students.

3-3-405. *Holdings.* The institution shall have available and easily accessible standard reference works, professional journals, and current periodicals appropriate to the curriculum. Consideration also shall be given to supplementary library resources contracted by the institution and online resources available to its student body.

3-3-406. *Acquisitions.* Library acquisitions are the joint responsibility of the faculty and library staff, with the greater amount of input emanating from the faculty. Moreover, it is the faculty's responsibility to inspire, motivate, and direct student usage of the library resources.

TITLE III EVALUATION STANDARDS

Chapter 4 Standards for Academic 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 academic associate's degree programs. All Associate of Art and Associate of Science degree programs are academic associate's degree programs. Any other associate's degree programs that include at least 15 semester hours, 22.5 quarter hours, or the equivalent of general education also are considered to be academic associate's degree programs. Institutions that offer academic associate's degree programs are collegiate institutions.

3-4-100 – STATE AUTHORITY

The institution must be legally authorized by the appropriate state education agency, where such authority exists, to confer the associate's degree.

3-4-200 – EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES

3-4-201. Objectives. The objectives of an associate's degree program reflect the application of an institution's mission to its constituencies. An institution applying for the inclusion of an academic associate's degree program shall demonstrate that its programs, courses, and services are appropriate to its mission and to its specific goals and objectives.

Programs at collegiate institutions should emphasize both the achievement of vocational objectives and general education. This emphasis requires courses in general education that are both quantitatively and qualitatively relevant to the chosen degree.

3-4-202. Education Requirements. The minimum number of credits required for the academic associate's degree shall be 60 semester hours, 90 quarter hours, or their equivalent, normally earned over a period of four semesters, six quarters, or the equivalent. Transfer and award of credit for appropriate work at other institutions may be granted.

There shall be a minimum of 30 semester hours, 45 quarter hours, or their equivalent in courses within the areas of concentration; and a minimum of 15 semester hours, 22.5 quarter hours, or their equivalent in general education courses. Courses within the area of concentration of the subject matter of the program shall not be considered general education courses. The catalog must identify the courses that satisfy the concentration and general education requirements, and it must provide an explanation of the course numbering system.

General education and academic subject offerings, as distinguished from the professional or vocational offerings of a collegiate institution, shall place emphasis on principles and theory and not on practical applications associated with a particular occupation or profession. General education courses give balance to the total program and must be appropriate for the program and the needs of the students. The Council's expectations for general education, humanities, mathematics and the sciences, and social sciences are outlined in the Glossary section.

3-4-203. Curriculum. The curriculum shall quantitatively and qualitatively approximate the standards at other collegiate institutions offering academic associate's degrees. It should help students acquire necessary skills such as reading, writing, communicating, critical thinking, and the basic use of computers. Instructional procedures, texts, materials, and technology shall be appropriate to the purposes, curriculums, and standards of collegiate institutions. Evidence shall be provided that curricular offerings require appropriate use of library resources.

3-4-204. Enrollment. Enrollment in the second year of a two-year program must be sufficient to support regularly scheduled classes and laboratory work. Second-year work shall be based upon appropriate first-year prerequisites.

3-4-300 – FACULTY

3-4-301. Preparation. The institution shall have an adequate and competent faculty working under conditions that encourage the best efforts of each individual. In judging competence, consideration shall be given to the academic preparation and experience of each instructor.

3-4-302. Assignments. During any academic term, a faculty member shall not be assigned to teach in more than three fields of instruction. The size of the faculty shall be appropriate to the total student enrollment.

Instructors teaching general education shall hold a minimum of a master's degree. Instructors at a minimum shall have earned 18 semester or equivalent hours of coursework in the area of their teaching discipline. At internationally based institutions, transcripts in languages other than English for general education instructors must be translated into English.

Instructors teaching courses other than general education shall hold bachelor's degrees at a minimum and shall be assigned based on their major and minor academic preparation and/or related experience. However, exceptions to the bachelor's degree requirement may be justified for instructors who have demonstrable current exceptional professional level experience in the assigned field, professional certification(s), letters of recommendation or attestations from previous employer(s), letters attesting to this expertise from professional peers not connected to the college, real examples of previous success in the field such as published work, juried exhibits and shows, evidence of a professional portfolio accepted by the college and available for review, and other significant documented experience relevant to the courses to be taught. Minor or related degrees could be considered but will not be the sole determining factor. Duration of time associated with this alternative justification is dependent on the quality and significance of the work experience. The institution must be able to justify the assignment of any instructor who does not hold a bachelor's degree in the assigned teaching field.

In addition to the degree requirements outlined above, at least one-half of the courses, including those core courses common to nonacademic degree or nondegree programs, shall be taught by faculty members holding graduate degrees, professional degrees such as J.D. or M.D., or bachelor's degrees plus professional certification. This calculation does not apply, however, to courses in fields in which graduate degrees, professional degrees, or professional certifications are not generally available.

3-4-303. Teaching Load. Teaching loads shall be reasonable and shall be justified by factors such as the number of different preparations required; the type and method of instruction; the size of classes; the level of instruction; the qualifications of the instructor; the academic advising, committee membership, and guidance and student organizations assigned; and the other administrative, research, publication, and community relations responsibilities of the instructor.

3-4-304. *Stability.* There shall be an adequate core of full- and part-time faculty to ensure sound direction and continuity of development for the educational programs. The institution shall demonstrate through outcomes, length of service, reasonable retention of faculty, and other measures that the core faculty ensures that the institution will meet its stated mission and objectives. The institution shall promote stability in the faculty through compensation, fringe benefits, professional growth opportunities, and other incentives.

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 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. ACICS, if unable to determine qualifications, may require the translation and/or evaluation of transcripts in languages other than English. The professionally trained individual must participate in documented professional growth activities.

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

3-4-402. *Budget.* An annual library budget, appropriate to the size and scope of the institution and the programs offered, shall be established and the allocation expended for the purchase of books, periodicals, library equipment, and other resource and reference materials.

3-4-403. *Function.* The library function is shaped by the educational programs of the college. Appropriate reference, research, and information resources must be made available to provide basic support for curricular and educational offerings and to enhance student learning.

3-4-404. *Use and Accessibility.* The faculty should inspire, motivate, and direct student usage of the library resources. The library's adequacy ultimately is determined by the extent to which physical and/or online resources including full-text resources support all the courses offered by the institution.

For library resources, the Dewey Decimal System, Library of Congress classification system, or other appropriate system of classification should be used. Records of physical and/or online circulation and inventory shall be current and accurate and must be maintained to assist staff and faculty in evaluating the adequacy and utilization of the physical and/or online resources including full-text holdings.

Physical and/or online, full-text library materials and services must be available at times consistent with the typical student's schedule in both day and evening programs. If computer software is utilized on site, a sufficient number of terminals shall be provided for student use. If interlibrary agreements are in effect, provisions for such use must be practical and accessible and use must be documented. In determining the appropriateness of such agreements, consid-

eration will be given to the nature of the participating library's collection, provisions for interlibrary loans, and the degree of accessibility to the students. A college's library must contain, at a minimum, a core collection of physical and/or online resources including full-text reference materials appropriate for the offerings of the institution.

3-4-405. *Holdings.* A collegiate library shall contain up-to-date physical and/or online resources including full-text titles appropriate for the size of the institution and the breadth of and enrollment in its educational programs. The library collection shall include holdings on the Humanities, Arts, Social Sciences, and Sciences, including mathematics; magazines and essential professional journals and periodicals; and, when appropriate, online data networks and retrieval systems, CD-ROMs, and interactive research systems that support the offerings of the institution.

3-4-406. *Acquisitions.* Library acquisitions are the joint responsibility of the faculty and library staff, with the greater amount of input emanating from the faculty.

TITLE III EVALUATION STANDARDS

Chapter 5 Standards for Bachelor's Degree Programs

INTRODUCTION

In addition to the general standards in Chapter 1, which apply to all institutions, the following standards apply specifically to bachelor's degree programs. Institutions that offer bachelor's degree programs are considered to be collegiate institutions.

3-5-100 – STATE AUTHORITY

The institution must be legally authorized by the appropriate state education agency, where such authority exists, to confer the bachelor's degree.

3-5-200 – EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES

3-5-201. Objectives. The objectives of a bachelor's degree program reflect the application of an institution's mission to its constituencies. An institution applying for the inclusion of a bachelor's degree program shall demonstrate that its programs, courses, and services are appropriate to its mission and to its specific goals and objectives.

Programs at collegiate institutions should emphasize both the achievement of vocational objectives and general education. This emphasis requires courses in general education that are both quantitatively and qualitatively relevant to the chosen degree.

3-5-202. Education Requirements. The minimum number of credits required for the bachelor's degree shall be 120 semester hours, 180 quarter hours, or their equivalent, normally earned over a period of eight semesters, 12 quarters, or their equivalent. Transfer and award of credit for appropriate work at other institutions may be granted.

There shall be a minimum of 60 semester hours, 90 quarter hours, or their equivalent within the areas of concentration; and a minimum of 36 semester hours, 54 quarter hours, or their equivalent in general education courses. Courses within the area of concentration of the subject matter of the program shall not be considered general education courses. The catalog must identify the courses that satisfy the concentration and general education requirements and those that are upper-division courses, and it must provide an explanation of the course numbering system. The catalog must state the expectations for all four years of the bachelor's degree curriculum and comply with Appendix C, Guidelines for Institutional Publications. If the institution offers only the last two years of the bachelor's degree program, the catalog and all advertising materials must clearly describe the requirements for admission, including requirements for the completion of necessary prerequisite courses and general education courses to ensure that the student will complete all of the requirements for the bachelor's degree upon graduation.

General education and academic subject offerings, as distinguished from the professional or vocational offerings of a collegiate institution, shall place emphasis on principles and theory and not on practical applications associated with a particular occupation or profession. General education courses give balance to the total program and must be appropriate for the program and the needs of the students. The Council's expectations for general education, humanities, mathematics and the sciences, and social sciences are outlined in the Glossary section.

3-5-203. Curriculum. The curriculum shall quantitatively and qualitatively approximate the standards at other collegiate institutions offering bachelor's degrees. It should help students acquire necessary skills such as reading, writing, communicating, critical thinking, and the basic use of computers. Instructional procedures, texts, materials, and technology shall be appropriate to the purposes, curriculums, and standards of collegiate institutions. Evidence shall be provided that curricular offerings require appropriate use of library resources.

3-5-204. Enrollment. Enrollment in upper-division courses must be sufficient to support regularly scheduled and conducted classes and laboratory work. Upper-division work shall be offered and shall be based upon appropriate prerequisites.

3-5-300 – FACULTY

3-5-301. Preparation. The institution shall have an adequate and competent faculty working under conditions that encourage the best efforts of each individual. In judging competence, consideration shall be given to the academic preparation and experience of each instructor.

3-5-302. Assignments. During any academic term, a faculty member shall not be assigned to teach in more than three fields of instruction and preferably in not more than two fields. The size of the faculty shall be appropriate for the total student enrollment.

Instructors teaching general education shall hold a minimum of a master's degree. Instructors at a minimum shall have earned 18 semester or equivalent hours of coursework in the area of their teaching discipline. At internationally based institutions, transcripts in languages other than English for general education instructors must be translated into English.

Instructors teaching courses other than general education shall hold bachelor's degrees at a minimum and shall be assigned based on their major and minor academic preparation and/or related experience. However, exceptions to the bachelor's degree requirement may be justified for instructors who have demonstrable current exceptional professional level experience in the assigned field, such as documented coursework in the field, professional certification(s), letters of recommendation or attestations from previous employer(s), letters attesting to this expertise from professional peers not connected to the college, real examples of previous success in the field such as published work, juried exhibits and shows, evidence of a professional portfolio accepted by the college and available for review, and other significant documented experience relevant to the courses to be taught. Minor or related degrees could be considered but will not be the sole determining factor. Duration of time associated with this alternative justification is dependent on the quality and significance of the work experience. The institution must be able to justify the assignment of any instructor who does not hold a bachelor's degree in the assigned teaching field.

In addition to the degree requirements outlined above, at least one-half of all lower-division courses and all upper-division courses, including those core courses common to nonacademic degree or nondegree programs, shall be taught by faculty members holding graduate degrees, professional degrees such as J.D. or M.D., or bachelor's degrees plus professional certification. This calculation does not apply, however, to courses in fields in which graduate degrees, professional degrees, or professional certifications are not generally available.

3-5-303. Teaching Load. Teaching loads shall be reasonable and shall be justified by factors such as the number of different preparations required; the type and method of instruction; the size of classes; the level of instruction; the qualifications of the instructor; the academic advising, committee membership, and guidance and student organizations assigned; and the other administrative, research, publication, and community relations responsibilities of the instructor.

3-5-304. *Stability.* There shall be an adequate core of full- and part-time faculty to ensure sound direction and continuity of development for the educational programs. The institution shall demonstrate through outcomes, length of service, reasonable retention of faculty, and other measures that the core faculty ensures that the institution will meet its stated mission and objectives. The institution shall promote stability in the faculty through compensation, fringe benefits, professional growth opportunities, and other incentives.

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 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. ACICS, if unable to determine qualifications, may require the translation and/or evaluation of transcripts in languages other than English. The professional trained individual must participate in documented professional growth activities.

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

3-5-402. *Budget.* An annual library budget, appropriate to the size and scope of the institution and the programs offered, shall be established and the allocation expended for the purchase of books, periodicals, library equipment, and other resource and reference materials.

3-5-403. *Function.* The library function is shaped by the educational programs of the college. Appropriate reference, research, and information resources must be made available to provide basic support for curricular and educational offerings and to enhance student learning.

3-5-404. *Use and Accessibility.* The faculty should inspire, motivate, and direct student usage of the library resources. The library's adequacy ultimately is determined by the extent to which physical and/or online resources including full-text resources support all the courses offered by the institution.

For library resources, the Dewey Decimal System, Library of Congress classification system, or other appropriate system of classification should be used. Records of physical and/or online circulation and inventory shall be current and accurate and must be maintained to assist staff and faculty in evaluating the adequacy and utilization of the physical and/or online resources including full-text holdings.

Physical and/or online, full-text library materials and services must be available at times consistent with the typical student's schedule in both day and evening programs. If computer software is utilized on site, a sufficient number of terminals shall be provided for student use. If interlibrary agreements are in effect, provisions for such use must be practical and accessible and use must be documented. In determining the appropriateness of such agreements, consideration will be given to the nature of the participating library's collection, provisions for interlibrary loans, and the

degree of accessibility to the students. A college's library must contain, at a minimum, a core collection of physical and/or online resources including full-text reference materials appropriate for the offerings of the institution.

3-5-405. *Holdings.* A collegiate library shall contain up-to-date physical and/or online resources including full-text titles appropriate for the size of the institution and the breadth of and enrollment in its educational programs. The library collection shall include holdings on the Humanities, Arts, Social Sciences, and Sciences, including mathematics; magazines and professional journals and periodicals; and, when appropriate, online data networks and retrieval systems, CD-ROMs, and interactive research systems that support the offerings of the institution.

3-5-406. *Acquisitions.* Library acquisitions are the joint responsibility of the faculty and library staff, with the greater amount emanating from the faculty.

Chapter 6

Standards for Master's Degree Programs

INTRODUCTION

In addition to the general standards in Chapter 1, which apply to all institutions, the following standards apply specifically to master's degree programs.

3-6-100 – NATURE OF GRADUATE EDUCATION

The awarding of a master's degree signifies that, in the judgment of the faculty, the student has attained specialized competence which qualifies the recipient for opportunities and additional responsibilities not ordinarily available to the baccalaureate degree recipient. To make a graduate program distinctive, a component designed to teach research skills should be included.

3-6-200 – STATE AUTHORITY

The institution must be legally authorized by the appropriate state education agency, where such authority exists, to confer the master's degree.

3-6-300 – ORGANIZATION AND ADMINISTRATION

3-6-301. *Committee Oversight.* The responsibility for developing, modifying, and maintaining the graduate program shall be performed by a qualified designated committee to include, but not restricted to, students, faculty, administrators, and employers.

3-6-302. *Program Administration.* The administration of the graduate program shall be performed by a qualified individual with appropriate administrative and educational background and experience for the direction of a graduate program. The duties of this individual may be full- or part-time with adequate staff support.

3-6-400 – EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES

3-6-401. *Objectives.* The objectives of a master's degree program reflect the application of an institution's mission to its constituencies. An institution applying for the inclusion of a master's degree program shall demonstrate that its programs, courses, and services are appropriate to its mission and to its specific goals and objectives. Master's degree programs should emphasize both mastery of subject matter and an understanding of related research and research methodology. This emphasis implies development of the student's ability to integrate and apply the subject matter.

3-6-402. *Program Development.* Graduate faculty must be directly involved in the development and modification of master's degree program policies, procedures, and curricula. Flexible instructional approaches and scheduling patterns are encouraged in developing innovative graduate programs in order to serve varying student groups and their special needs.

3-6-403. *Education Requirements.* The minimum number of credits required for the master's degree shall be 30 semester hours, 45 quarter hours, or their equivalent, of course work plus a thesis at the graduate level; or 36 semester hours, 54 quarter hours, or their equivalent, of course work at the graduate level if a thesis is not required. The master's degree normally is earned over three semesters, five quarters, or the equivalent. The catalog must provide an explanation of the course numbering system.

3-6-404. *Curriculum.* The curriculum shall quantitatively and qualitatively approximate the standards at other institutions offering master's degrees. Instructional procedures, texts, materials, and technology shall be appropriate to the purposes, curriculums, and standards of collegiate institutions. Evidence shall be provided that curricular offerings require the appropriate use of library resources.

3-6-405. *Enrollment.* Enrollment in graduate-level courses must be sufficient to support regularly scheduled and conducted classes and laboratory work. Graduate-level courses shall be offered and shall be based on appropriate prerequisites.

3-6-500 – FACULTY

3-6-501. *Preparation.* The institution shall have an adequate and competent faculty working under conditions that encourage the best efforts of each individual. In judging competence of faculty, consideration shall be given to the academic preparation and experience of each instructor.

3-6-502. *Assignments.* Instructors shall be assigned in terms of their major and minor areas of academic preparation and related experience. The size of the faculty shall be appropriate for the graduate enrollment. All master's program faculty should have appropriate graduate degrees, and the number with terminal degrees should be appropriate for the graduate enrollment. At least one-half of the graduate-level courses are to be taught by faculty possessing terminal degrees. Professional certification is not a substitute for a terminal degree. The institution also should encourage graduate faculty members to engage in scholarly research and to publish in professional journals.

Faculty who do not possess appropriate graduate degrees may be assigned to teach in master's degree programs if they have exceptional practical or professional experience in the assigned field or if the assigned field is one in which graduate degrees are not widely available. In either case, the burden is on the institution to demonstrate and justify the qualifications of the faculty to teach their assigned courses. Faculty assigned under this exception are not considered to have the equivalent of a terminal degree.

3-6-503. *Teaching Load.* Teaching loads shall be reasonable and shall be justified by factors such as the number of different preparations required; the type and method of instruction; the size of classes; the level of instruction; the qualifications of the instructor; the academic advising, committee membership, and guidance and student organizations assigned; and the other administrative, research, publication, professional activities and/or scholarship, and community relations responsibilities of the instructor.

3-6-504. *Stability.* There shall be an adequate core of full- and part-time faculty to ensure sound direction and continuity of development for the educational programs. The institution shall demonstrate through outcomes, length of service, reasonable retention of faculty, and other measures that the core faculty ensures that the institution will meet its stated mission and objectives. The institution shall promote stability in the faculty through compensation, fringe benefits, professional growth opportunities, and other incentives.

3-6-600 – ADMISSIONS

3-6-601. *Enrollment Prerequisites.* The threshold admission requirement to a master's degree program is a baccalaureate degree. If admission to a professional program is granted without a baccalaureate degree, the burden is on the institution to demonstrate and justify that the alternate admission requirement is accepted by a recognized licensing or specialized accrediting agency and is common practice among accredited institutions of higher education.

In instances where a baccalaureate degree is not used as the threshold for admission, the following conditions must be met: (a) admission to the program may be granted only to eligible students who have completed at a minimum an associate degree or equivalent; (b) the program must ensure that a baccalaureate degree, which meets ACICS standards, is awarded upon completion of baccalaureate degree requirements or concurrently with the award of the master's degree; and (c) the baccalaureate degree program must include in its curricular requirements sufficient and appropriate bridge to master's-level courses in the field of study and must be approved by ACICS.

3-6-602. *Evaluation of Applicants.* Institutions should use appropriate techniques to evaluate applicants and to determine whether they have the academic qualifications to benefit from graduate study.

3-6-603. *Transfer of Credit.* Transfer of credit for appropriate master's-level course work from another institution may be granted according to the policy established by the institution. No more than one-half of the credits required for the master's degree may be transferred from another institution.

3-6-604. *Conformance to Institutional Objectives.* Admissions procedures, transfer policies, and requirements for graduation shall be consistent with the overall philosophy and objectives of the institution.

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. 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 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. ACICS, if unable to determine qualifications, may require the translation and/or evaluation of transcripts in languages other than English. The professionally trained individual must participate in documented professional growth activities.

There shall be a professionally trained individual on duty for sufficient hours, as published by the institution, to support the programs and to assist students with library functions and research. This individual shall be competent both to use and to aid in the use of the library technologies and resources.

3-6-702. *Budget.* An annual library budget, appropriate to the size and scope of the institution and the programs offered, shall be established and the allocation expended for the purchase of books, periodicals, library equipment, and other resource and reference materials.

3-6-703. *Function.* The library function is shaped by the educational programs of the institution. Institutions offering master's degree programs shall provide access to substantially different library resources in terms of their depth and breadth from those required for baccalaureate degree programs.

These resources shall include bibliographic and monographic references, major professional journals and reference services, research and methodology materials, and, as appropriate, information technologies. The depth and breadth of the accessible library holdings shall be such as to exceed the requirements of the average student in order to encourage the intellectual development of superior students and to enrich the professional development of the faculty.

Appropriate reference, research, and information resources must be made available to enhance, augment, and support the curricular and educational offerings and to enhance student learning. The resources shall include the study, reading, and information technology facilities necessary to make the educational programs effective.

3-6-704. *Use and Accessibility.* It is the faculty's responsibility to inspire, motivate, and direct student usage of the library resources. The library's adequacy ultimately is determined by the extent to which physical and/or online, full-text resources support all the courses offered by the institution.

For library resources, the Dewey Decimal System, Library of Congress classification system, or other appropriate system of classification should be used. Records of physical and/or online circulation and inventory shall be current and accurate and must be maintained to assist staff and faculty in evaluating the adequacy and utilization of the physical and/or online, full-text holdings.

Physical and/or online, full-text library materials and services must be available at times consistent with the typical student's schedule in both day and evening programs. If computer software is utilized on site, a sufficient number of terminals shall be provided for student use. If interlibrary agreements are in effect, provisions for such use must be practical and accessible and use must be documented. In determining the appropriateness of such agreements, consideration will be given to the uniqueness of the lending library's collection, provisions for interlibrary loans, and the degree of accessibility to the students. A college's library must contain, at a minimum, a core collection of physical and/or on-line, full-text reference materials appropriate for the offerings of the institution.

3-6-705. *Holdings.* The library shall support the academic programs and the intellectual and cultural development of students, faculty, and staff; shall provide current and appropriate physical and/or online, full-text resources for the size of the institution and the breadth of and enrollment in its educational programs; shall provide, when appropriate, on-line data networks and retrieval systems, CD-ROMs, and interactive research systems; and shall be capable of supporting an understanding of scholarly research and/or scholarly research at the graduate level.

3-6-706. *Acquisitions.* Library acquisitions are the joint responsibility of the faculty and library staff, with the greater amount of input emanating from the faculty.

3-6-800 – PUBLICATIONS

There shall be a separate section in the institution's catalog describing the master's degree objectives, program requirements, admissions procedures, transfer policies, graduation requirements, regulations, and course descriptions.

Chapter 7**Standards for Doctoral Degree Programs**

INTRODUCTION

In addition to the general standards in Chapter 1, which apply to all institutions, the following standards apply specifically to doctorate degree programs, and are being applied as part of a pilot project. The current scope of recognition for ACICS, as approved by the U.S. Department of Education and the Council for Higher Education Accreditation, includes diploma programs and degree programs through the Master's degree. Therefore, accreditation of a doctoral program by ACICS does not make the program eligible for purposes of participation in federal student aid programs, as described in Title IV of the HEA. Institutions may confer only professionally-oriented doctorate degrees. Unlike academic doctoral degrees that prepare students to work in academia or research, professional doctoral degrees are designed to make students experts in their fields and in the workplace. As such, the outcomes for those earning a professional doctoral degree involve using knowledge and techniques to purposefully address problems and opportunities in their workplace. These include degrees such as the J.D., Ed.D., DFA, DBA, etc., but excluding the Ph.D.

3-7-100 – NATURE OF DOCTORAL EDUCATION

The awarding of a professional doctorate degree signifies that, in the judgment of the faculty, the student has attained specialized and practical competence which qualifies the recipient for opportunities and additional responsibilities beyond the master's degree level.

The doctorate degree is to be professionally oriented and must include the following:

- (a) coursework which heightens the level of professional expertise in the area or field of study sought.
- (b) an understanding of appropriate research methods relevant to the area or field of study sought. The goal of the research is to apply technologies, knowledge, or concepts in a new way to a workplace problem. This provides the student an opportunity to apply knowledge to a high-level issue in the same way he or she might operate at work.
- (c) evidence that the coursework enables graduates to function/perform in the area or field of study sought.

To make a doctoral program distinctive, a component shall be designed to include practical research or a research project, or dissertation, or other required academic activities. A doctoral degree program is further designed to provide the mastery of a subject, theory, and methodology in a specific field of study. The program shall have a strategic plan that describes the purpose of the program, provides guidance about its future, and identified measures used to define its success.

3-7-200 – STATE AUTHORITY

The institution must be legally authorized by the appropriate state or national education agency, where such authority exists, to confer the doctorate degree.

3-7-300 – ORGANIZATION AND ADMINISTRATION

3-7-301. *Committee Oversight.* The responsibility for developing, modifying, and maintaining the doctoral degree program shall be carried out by a qualified designated committee to include, but not restricted to, faculty and administrators who, at a minimum, possess a doctoral/terminal professional degree in a related subject area.

3-7-302. *Program Administration.* The administration of the doctoral degree program shall be the responsibility of a qualified individual with appropriate administrative and educational background and experience related to a doctoral degree program. These qualifications must include a doctoral/terminal professional degree in a related subject area. The duties of this individual should be full-time with adequate staff support. The program must require students to work with a well-qualified and credentialed committee knowledgeable in methods of research and in the subject matter, chaired by an appropriately credentialed individual with expertise in the program area.

3-7-303. *Program Advisory Committee.* A program advisory committee, comprised of individuals from similar accredited doctoral programs and representatives of the employers that would be hiring graduates, shall meet at least annually with program administrators and faculty. The committee shall provide advice and guidance about the program, the currency and content of its curriculum, admissions criteria, and externship opportunities. Members of this committee may also provide information regarding the validity and rigor of the program and the quality of the graduates.

3-7-400 – EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES

3-7-401. *Objectives.* The objectives of a doctoral degree program reflect the application of an institution's mission to its constituencies. An institution applying for the inclusion of a doctoral degree program shall demonstrate that its programs, courses, and services are appropriate to its mission and to its specific goals and objectives. Doctoral degree programs should emphasize both mastery of subject matter and an understanding of related research and research methodology. Specific program objectives must be clearly stated.

The practical application of research methods must be emphasized in professional doctoral degree programs. This emphasis implies development of the student's ability to integrate and apply research to issues related to the discipline and its knowledge base as used in industry.

3-7-402. *Program Development.* Doctoral faculty must be directly involved in the development and modification of a doctorate degree program's policies, procedures, and curricula. Flexible instructional approaches and scheduling patterns are encouraged in developing innovative doctoral degree programs to serve varying students and their needs. The learning objectives must be advanced and provide the depth of practical learning or research.

3-7-403. *Education Requirements.* The number of credits required for the doctoral degree shall be, at a minimum, 90 semester hours, 135 quarter hours, or their equivalent, of course work beyond the bachelor's degree. If a master's degree in the same field of study, earned at an institution accredited by an agency recognized by the U.S. Department of Education, is required as a prerequisite for admission to the doctorate degree program, the number of credits required for the doctorate degree shall be, at a minimum, 54 semester hours, 81 quarter hours, or their equivalent. This includes credit for the research project/dissertation or other required academic or professional activities.

The doctoral degree normally is earned over three to five years or the equivalent for full-time students. Limitations on the time to degree for part-time students need to be clearly outlined. Statutes of limitations for program completion and course work must be clearly disclosed to students and included in the institutional catalog, as well as on the enrollment agreement.

For certain first-professional degrees whose structure differs from that of other professional doctoral degrees, the required credit hour total and expected time to degree shall conform to what is typical for the field.

The catalog must provide a detailed explanation of the required courses in the program, as well as a description of the required activities and research elements necessary to complete the program.

3-7-404. Curriculum. The curriculum shall quantitatively and qualitatively approximate the standards at other institutions offering comparable degrees. Instructional procedures, texts, materials, and technology shall be appropriate to the purposes, curriculums, and standards of collegiate institutions. Evidence shall be provided that curricular offerings require the appropriate use of research and library resources.

The program must be designed for each student to accomplish specified goals and objectives and contribute to competence in the subject area or profession at an advanced level. Such activities and requirements must be approved by a designated individual and at least two additional individuals within the respective field of study with appropriate credentials.

The research project or other required academic or professional activities must be reviewed, evaluated, and assessed by a committee as described above. At least one individual on the committee must be from another appropriately accredited institution within the subject area.

For programs that include the following components, credit hours shall be part of the total credits required for program completion and shall be allocated as follows:

- (a) Research project or dissertation – Credit hours shall not exceed 15 semester hours (22 quarter hours) for the research project.
- (b) Independent and directed studies – Credit hours shall not in total exceed 9 semester hours (14 quarter hours) and must consist of an experience(s) that directly relates to and complements the student's program of studies.
- (c) Internship or practicum – An internship or practicum shall be required of students with no or limited experience in the work environment they are prepared to enter. Credit hours shall not exceed 6 semester hours (9 quarter hours). Credit shall not be awarded for work experience that occurred before the student entered the program or as part of current job.

3-7-405. Enrollment. Enrollment must be sufficient to support regularly scheduled and conducted classes and coursework. Doctorate-level courses shall be offered and shall be based on appropriate prerequisites.

3-7-500 – FACULTY

3-7-501. Preparation. The institution shall have an adequate and competent faculty working under conditions that encourage the best efforts of each individual. In judging competence of faculty, consideration shall be given to the academic preparation and experience of each instructor.

3-7-502. Assignments. All doctoral degree courses shall be taught by faculty possessing doctoral or terminal professional degrees, related to the courses taught, from accredited or government-recognized international institutions. These individuals also must demonstrate expertise in the field of study taught, possess applicable professional experience for participating in a doctoral degree program, and maintain current professional certification in their discipline, where applicable.

Faculty shall be assigned in terms of their major and minor areas of academic preparation, related professional experience, and appropriate required professional certification to practice in the field. The size of the faculty shall be appropriate for the enrollment in the program. The institution shall demonstrate that faculty members are engaged in practical or scholarly research and are encouraged to publish in professional journals.

3-7-503. *Teaching Load.* Teaching loads shall be reasonable and shall be justified by factors such as the number of different preparations required; the type and method of instruction; the size of classes; the level of instruction; the qualifications of the instructor; academic advising, committee membership, and student guidance assigned; and the other administrative, research, publication, professional activities and/or scholarship, and community relations responsibilities of the instructor.

3-7-504. *Stability.* The proportion of faculty employed on a full-time basis shall be sufficient to ensure sound direction and continuity of development for the educational programs. The institution shall demonstrate through outcomes and other measures that the proportion of full-time faculty and the faculty's average length of service to the institution allow the institution to meet its stated mission. The institution shall promote stability in the faculty through compensation, fringe benefits, professional growth opportunities, and other incentives.

3-7-600 – ADMISSIONS

3-7-601. *Enrollment Prerequisites.* The threshold admission requirement to a doctorate degree program is, as appropriate, a bachelor's or master's degree earned from an appropriately accredited institution recognized by the U.S. Department of Education. A specific enrollment agreement must be established for the doctorate degree program.

3-7-602. *Evaluation of Applicants.* Institutions should use appropriate techniques to evaluate applicants and to determine whether they have the academic qualifications to successfully complete introductory doctoral-level coursework.

International students should have English skills to effectively communicate with faculty, staff, and other students. For non-English speaking students, a TOEFL score of 550 or an equivalent score on an internationally recognized test is required to enter a program offered at a U.S. located institution.

3-7-603. *Transfer of Credit.* The institution shall make public its policies on transfer of credit, including a statement of the criteria established by the institution by which a determination is made with regard to accepting credits from another institution. If the prerequisites for admission to the doctorate program is a master's degree in the same field of study earned at an institution accredited by an agency recognized by the U.S. Department of Education, a maximum of 36 semester hours, or 54 quarter hours, or their equivalent may be granted as transfer credits according to the policy established by the institution. In all other cases, no more than 20% for the doctorate degree may be transferred from another institution. Academic credit shall not be awarded for experiential learning activity.

3-7-604. *Conformance to Institutional Objectives.* Admissions procedures, transfer policies, and requirements for graduation shall be consistent with the overall philosophy, mission, and objectives of the institution.

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. 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 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. ACICS, if unable to determine qualifications, may require the translation and/or evaluation of transcripts in languages other than English. The professionally trained individual must participate in documented professional growth activities.

There shall be a professionally trained individual on duty for sufficient hours, as published by the institution, to support the programs and to assist students with library functions and research. This individual shall be competent both to use and to aid in the use of the library technologies and resources.

3-7-702. Budget. An annual library budget, appropriate to the size and scope of the institution and the programs offered, shall be established and the allocation expended for the purchase of books, periodicals, library equipment, and other resource and reference materials.

3-7-703. Function. The library function is shaped by the educational programs of the institution. Institutions offering doctorate degree programs shall provide access to resources which enhance, support, and are influential to research activities conducted with regard to the field of study.

These resources shall include bibliographic and monographic references, major professional and scholarly journals and reference services, research and methodology materials, and, as appropriate, information technologies. The depth and breadth of the accessible library holdings shall be such as to exceed the requirements of the student to encourage the intellectual development of students and to enrich the professional development of the faculty.

Appropriate reference, research, and information resources must be made available to enhance, augment, and support the curricular and educational offerings and to enhance student learning. The resources shall include the study, reading, and information technology facilities necessary to make the educational programs effective.

3-7-704. Use and Accessibility. Faculty are responsible for inspiring, motivating, and directing student usage of the library resources. The library's adequacy ultimately is determined by the extent to which physical and/or on-line, full-text resources support all the courses offered by the institution. For library resources, the Dewey Decimal System, Library of Congress classification system, or other appropriate system of classification should be used. Records of physical and/or on-line circulation and inventory shall be current and accurate and must be maintained to assist staff and faculty in evaluating the adequacy and utilization of the holdings.

Physical and/or on-line, full-text library materials and services must be available at times consistent with the typical student's schedule in both day and evening programs. If computer software is utilized, a sufficient number of terminals shall be provided for student use. If interlibrary agreements are in effect, provisions for such use must be practical

and accessible and use must be documented. In determining the appropriateness of such agreements, consideration will be given to the uniqueness of the lending library's collection, provisions for interlibrary loans, and the degree of accessibility to the students. A college's library must contain, at a minimum, a core collection of physical and/or on-line reference materials appropriate for the offerings of the institution.

3-7-705. *Holdings.* The library shall support the academic programs and the intellectual and cultural development of students, faculty, and staff; shall provide current and appropriate resources for the size of the institution and the breadth of and enrollment in its educational programs; shall provide, when appropriate, physical and/or on-line, full-text data networks and retrieval systems, CD-ROMs, and interactive research systems; and shall be capable of supporting scholarly research at the graduate level.

3-7-706. *Acquisitions.* Library acquisitions are the joint responsibility of the faculty and library staff, with the greater amount of input emanating from the faculty.

3-7-800 – PUBLICATIONS

There shall be a separate section in the institution's catalog describing the doctorate degree program requirements, admissions procedures, transfer policies, graduation requirements, regulations, and course descriptions.

GLOSSARY OF DEFINITIONS

The following definitions are provided in order to assist institutions in understanding and interpreting the Accreditation Criteria. The definitions include some of the most commonly used terms and are defined to reflect their most common usage. These normative definitions drawn from no single source are offered by way of example rather than limitation. The Council recognizes the evolving and dynamic nature of American postsecondary education. It has no intention of imposing rigid expectations. When an institution departs from these norms it may be called upon to defend the academic integrity of the questioned activity.

Ability to Benefit. A determination made by the institution that, in the absence of a high school diploma or GED certificate, the student will be able to benefit, with or without remediation, from the program(s) offered at the institution. The determination should be made before the person is financially obligated or enrolled in a program.

Academic Probation. Students placed on academic probation are subject to increased scrutiny of their academic achievements due to a previous history of academic difficulty. The probation policy must define the conditions of probation, including how long a student may remain on probation and the requirements for being removed from probation. The institution may establish additional policies as it desires.

Academic Credential. A certificate, diploma, or degree stating that the student has been graduated from a certain curriculum or has passed certain subjects.

Academic Year. A period of time generally divided into two semesters, three quarters, or their equivalent, in which a full-time student is expected to complete the coursework equivalent to at least two semesters, three quarters, or their equivalent.

Accreditation. The process whereby a nationally recognized agency or organization grants public recognition to a unit of an educational organization (such as a school, institute, college, university, or specialized program of study) indicating that it meets established standards of quality as determined through initial and periodic self-study and evaluation by peers. The essential purpose of the accreditation process is to provide a professional judgment as to quality of the educational institution or program(s) offered and to encourage continual improvement thereof.

Achievement Test. A test which measures a student's existing skills and knowledge (that which has been taught to the student) in particular areas such as reading, math, map skills, grammar, etc.

Additional Location. See Campus, Branch.

Aptitude Test. Aptitude and its tests refer to the ability/potential to do schoolwork in different areas such as mechanics, art, clerical procedures, verbal, and numerical ability. (Important factors such as home environment, familiarity with the English language, and physical and psychological well-being at the time of the test all affect this kind of measure.) Aptitude tests often are timed, often are multiple choice, and are "normed" for cutoff score on a nationwide sampling of students.

Applied General Education. Applied general education is defined as courses that involve the application of principles and concepts in communications, humanities and fine arts, mathematics, natural and physical sciences, social and behavioral sciences, and technology to the practical affairs of a specific occupation or occupational cluster. Applied general education courses enhance the ability of an individual to apply academic and occupational skills in the workplace. Examples of applied general education courses include technical writing, business writing, business statistics, business mathematics, organizational behavior, and human relations.

Area of Concentration. In a degree program, the focus of study. Also known as the major. The requirements for the major or area of concentration are based upon clearly defined and articulated learning objectives, including a mastery

of the knowledge, methods, and theories pertinent to a particular area of inquiry, discipline, or field. General education and other courses not related to the major do not qualify as concentration coursework.

Articulation. An understanding or agreement between institutions to accommodate the movement of students and the transfer of credits between institutions.

Asynchronous Interactions. Teaching/learning interactions between students and instructors which take place intermittently or non-simultaneously with a time delay.

Audioconferencing. Structured voice-only teaching/learning interaction among individuals or groups in two or more sites.

Blended Course or Blended Learning. A course or learning activity that combines online and face-to-face, in-class sessions. Also called “hybrid” course or learning.

Bulletin Board System (BBS). A computer-based online community which allows participants to interact with each other through text messages.

Calendar. The system by which the institution structures its school (academic) year. The three common types of calendars are the semester, the quarter, and the trimester. The semester calendar is generally composed of two semesters of 15 to 17 weeks of classes each, including final examinations. The quarter calendar is generally composed of three quarters, usually with 10 to 12 weeks of classes each, including final examinations. The summer quarter is sometimes subdivided into terms of shorter length. The trimester calendar is composed of three 15-week terms including final examinations. The third may be subdivided.

Campus. All facilities where educational activities take place that are under the direct control of the on-site administration.

Campus, Branch. A branch campus is a location of an institution that is geographically apart and independent of the main campus of that institution, but under the same corporate structure as the main campus (i.e., part of the main campus corporation or a wholly owned subsidiary). The branch campus is permanent in nature, offers courses in educational programs leading to a degree, certificate, or other recognized educational credential, and has its own budget, faculty, administrative staff and supervisory organization.

Campus, Main. A main campus is the primary location of an institution accredited by ACICS. This campus is expected to meet fully all applicable standards set forth in the Accreditation Criteria. (See Section 1-3-101)

Campus Addition. See Learning Site

Category Grant. An institutionally financed award to all students who qualify by meeting the published standards for a grant to similarly circumstanced students, such as a grant to active members of the military.

Certificate. A document issued to evidence completion of a course, seminar, or an academic program. An academic program awarding a certificate is usually shorter in length than a program resulting in a diploma. See definition of a Diploma.

Chat Room. An online or virtual meeting space for multiple learners to engage in real-time text-based discussions.

Clock (or Contact) Hour. A minimum of 50 minutes of supervised or directed instruction and appropriate break(s).

Community Resources. Individuals, organizations, or businesses that provide information, guidance or support to an institution, such as professional and trade associations, employers, guest speakers, and advisory committees.

Competency-based Program. See also Direct Assessment Competency-based Programs. A competency-based program clearly defines the skills, knowledge and professional behavior (“soft skills”) that are required for a student or a graduate to perform at a level considered to be “competent” by practitioners and employers in the field. It focuses on direct, not indirect, assessment methods to measure student learning in lieu of in-class seat time, credit hours, or clock hours. It utilizes a robust curriculum development process and comprehensively specifies how qualified faculty and/or other eligible experts in the field would directly assess the achievement of required competencies and student learning.

Competency Test. A test with pre-established standards to measure performance. An example would be a spelling component consisting of ten questions where a score of seven or more is passing. The cutoff “pass-fail” point is referred to as criterion referenced. Usually used for promotion or graduation purposes, these tests are not standardized nationally.

Computer-Assisted Instruction (CAI). A type of self-paced instruction that uses the computer as the primary medium for tutorials, drills, repetitive practice, simulation, or games.

Connect Time. The amount of time that an online student has been logged on to the education provider’s computer or server for a particular session. The connect time may be used by a school to monitor an online student’s “attendance” and participation in a class session.

Course. A single subject described in an institutional catalog or bulletin.

Credit. (1) The quantitative measurement assigned to a course generally stated in semester hours, quarter hours, or clock hours. (2) The recognition awarded upon successful completion of coursework.

Credit Conversion. The process of converting units of credit based on one kind of calendar to units based on another kind of calendar. For example, the three most common calendars convert as follows: quarter hours multiplied by two-thirds equal semester hours; semester hours multiplied by one and one-half equal quarter hours; and trimester hours are equal to semester hours unless the trimester is of less than 15 weeks’ duration, in which case the number of weeks and length of class sessions must be considered. While the institution may present itself as credit-without-term, one of the three traditional calendars must be used.

Credit Hour. A unit by which an institution may measure its course work. The number of credit hours assigned to a traditionally delivered course is usually defined by a combination of the number of hours per week in class, the number of hours per week in a laboratory, and/or the number of hours devoted to externship times the number of weeks in the term. One unit of credit is usually equivalent to, at a minimum, one hour of classroom study and outside preparation, two hours of laboratory experience, or three hours of externship, or a combination of the three times the number of weeks in the term. The number of credit hours assigned to a nontraditionally delivered course must be determined and justified by the institution and approved by the Council.

Credit Hour, Quarter. The number of credit hours assigned to a traditionally delivered course consists of a minimum of 10 classroom lecture periods of not less than 50 minutes each and which assumes outside reading and/or preparation; 20 laboratory clock hours where classroom theory is applied and explored, or manipulative skills are enhanced; 30 hours of external discipline-related work experience with indirect instructor supervision or employer assessment; or an appropriate combination of all three. The number of credit hours assigned to a nontraditionally delivered course must be determined and justified by the institution and approved by the Council.

Credit Hour, Semester. The number of credit hours assigned to a traditionally delivered course consists of a minimum of 15 classroom lecture periods of not less than 50 minutes each and which assumes outside reading and/or preparation; 30 laboratory clock hours where classroom theory is applied and explored, or manipulative skills are enhanced; 45 hours of external discipline-related work experience with indirect instructor supervision or employer assessment; or an appropriate combination of all three. The number of credit hours assigned to a nontraditionally delivered course must be determined and justified by the institution and approved by the Council.

Credit Hour, Trimester. A minimum fifteen-week term. Trimester credits are equivalent to semester credits.

Curriculum. A program of courses fulfilling the requirements for a certificate, diploma, or degree in a particular field of study. (See definition of Program.)

Degree. Credential awarded as official recognition for the successful completion of an academic program.

Degree, Advanced. A degree beyond the bachelor's degree (e.g., M.A., M.S., M.B.A., Ph.D.).

Degree, Associate. The academic credential granted upon successful completion of an educational program of generally two but less than four years of full-time equivalent college-level work including a minimum number of credits as specified under Sections 3-3-202 and 3-4-202.

Degree, Baccalaureate. The academic credential granted upon successful completion of an educational program of four years of full-time equivalent college-level work including a minimum number of credits as specified under Section 3-5-202.

Degree, First Professional. The first degree signifying completion of the minimum academic requirements for practice of a profession. A first professional degree is most commonly a bachelor's degree, but is sometimes a master's or doctorate (e.g., M.L.S., J.D., M.D.).

Degree, Graduate. (1) In general, any degree conferred by a graduate division or a graduate school of an institution of higher education. (2) More specifically, all advanced degrees, and also all first professional degrees which are conferred by graduate schools.

Degree, Professional Doctorate. The degree signifying completion of the advanced academic requirements for practice of a profession. A professional doctorate degree is most commonly a practitioner-based degree beyond the master's degree level (i.e., J.D., Ed.D., DFA, DBA, etc., but excluding the Ph.D.).

Degree, Specialized. The credential granted upon successful completion of an educational program of at least two academic years or equivalent of college-level work which includes an emphasis on occupational and technical course work.

Diploma. A document issued to evidence successful completion of an academic program. A diploma is awarded for programs varying in length from only a few months to those lasting several years and awarding degrees.

Direct Assessment Competency-based Program. A program that clearly defines the skills, knowledge and professional behavior ("soft skills") that are required of a student or a graduate to perform at a level considered to be "competent" by practitioners and employers in the field. Only "direct" assessment of student learning and competencies are acceptable. Direct assessment measures must apply to the course competencies required for the program. Examples of "direct assessment" measures are as follows: acceptable scores on industry-recognized licensure or certification examinations; standardized tests; pre- and post-tests; examinations and quizzes; research projects; case study analysis; criterion-based rating scale or rubric scores; course-embedded questions; observation of clinical experience, internships, or field work; and capstone projects, theses, exhibits, or performances. (For a federal definition and for Council standards, see Appendix H, Section 1).

("Indirect assessment" measures of student learning, while deemed valuable for institutional program evaluation and enhancement, are not included in the consideration for approval of a competency-based program. Examples of indirect measures are: course evaluations; hours spent in classes or on out-of-class educational activities; graduate or employer satisfaction surveys; graduate placement rates; student retention rates; and student perception surveys.)

Distance Education or Distance Learning. A structured educational situation in which the students and instructors are physically separated. Distance education supports regular and substantive interaction synchronously or asynchronously between instructor and learner, among learners, and between learners and learning resources through one or more interactive technologies.

Electronic Learning or E-learning. Refers to a wide range of methodologies used in the delivery of instructional content via Internet, satellite broadcast, interactive TV, CD-Rom, etc.

Employer Satisfaction. The level of employer satisfaction is a required element of the Campus Effectiveness Plan (see Section 3-1-111 of the Accreditation Criteria). Employer satisfaction and the level of satisfaction are defined by the institution based upon information collected on a regular basis from employers who have, or might, hire graduates from the programs offered by the institution. Recommended information includes a survey of local employers as well as non-local employers who have hired graduates. Satisfaction questions should cover different aspects of career preparation in general (such as professionalism, foundational and soft skills) as well as specific skills in the particular field and the overall satisfaction of the employer with the preparation of graduates provided by the institution.

Enrollment, Full-Time Equivalent. The equivalent number of full-time students at an established census date, equivalency being established by dividing the total student credit hours by the assumed normal individual load of credit hours.

Externship. A supervised practical experience that is the application of previously studied theory. Normally, three hours of work in a practical setting has the credit equivalency of one hour of classroom lecture. Under the supervision of a faculty member, a written agreement shall be developed that outlines the arrangement between the institution and the externship site, including specific learning objectives, course requirements, and evaluation criteria.

Face-to-Face or F2F. Refers to the traditional classroom teaching/learning environment. Also known as Instructor-led Training or ILT, on-ground training, or on-site training.

Faculty Contact Hours. The total hours of scheduled instructional activity spent by instructional faculty as of a specific period of time. If a course meets three hours per week for 15 weeks, it yields 45 contact hours.

Faculty Development. The activities by which faculty gain knowledge and skills to enhance expertise in the specific area(s) of instruction or on new curriculum concepts, theories and techniques of instruction, and educational media. The institution must demonstrate that the balance between methodology training (in-service) and content knowledge enhancement (professional growth) is appropriate for the individual faculty member. All activities must be documented. (See also “in-service training” and “professional growth”)

Financial Aid. Student financial assistance funded by state or federal programs and administered by the institution.

Follow-up. The study of any group of students or former students of the institution who have shared a common experience to determine if patterns emerge in their subsequent actions or behavior which prove useful in understanding, counseling, and establishing policies for other students; for example, a study of the number of graduates who have entered graduate schools or a study of the number of graduates who have obtained employment.

Four-Year Institution. (1) Literally, an institution of higher education offering four years of college-level work culminating in a bachelor's degree. (2) In common usage, distinguished from a two-year institution, and characterized by offering four or more years of coursework normally creditable toward a bachelor's or higher degree or equivalent award. In addition to coursework normally creditable toward a bachelor's or higher degree, four-year institutions may also offer other types of instruction; e.g., courses in general and continuing education, short courses, occupational curriculums leading to an associate degree, etc.

Full-Motion Video. Transmission of the complete action taking place at the originating site.

General Education. Those areas of learning which are deemed to be the common experience of all “educated” persons and must include subject matter from the humanities; mathematics and the sciences; and the social sciences.

General Education. Humanities. Courses in fields such as literature, philosophy, logic, foreign language, art, music, theater appreciation, and communications, including rhetoric, composition, and speech; but excluding business communications and business writing.

General Education. Mathematics and the Sciences—Courses such as biology, chemistry, physics, geology, astronomy, and mathematics theory and analysis, including algebra, trigonometry, geometry, calculus, and other advanced mathematics courses, but excluding business mathematics and basic computations.

General Education. Social Sciences—Courses such as history, economics, political science, geography, sociology, anthropology, and general psychology, but excluding courses such as practical psychology, selling techniques, and social or business behavior.

Graduate Satisfaction Level. The level of graduate satisfaction is a required element of the Campus Effectiveness Plan (see Section 3-1-111 of the Accreditation Criteria). Graduate satisfaction and the level of satisfaction are defined by the institution based upon information collected on a regular basis from students who have graduated from the programs offered by the institution. Recommended information includes the results of survey of graduates who left the institution at least six months prior to being contacted. Satisfaction questions should cover different aspects of the program and the institution as well as overall satisfaction of the graduate with the preparation for the position provided by the institution.

Graduation Rates (when available). ACICS is developing a measure of graduation rates that is comprehensive and applicable at the program, campus, and institution level. Once the measure has been implemented through the Campus Accountability Report and validated, the graduation rate will be a required element of the Campus Effectiveness Plan (see Section 3-1-111 of the Accreditation Criteria). The comprehensive graduation rate is defined by ACICS in terms of the number of students who have completed or graduated during a reporting year, divided by the number of completers and graduates plus the number of students who have withdrawn, and expressed as a percent. The graduation rate, also called the graduates-to-leavers ratio, is calculated at both the program and campus levels, based upon data submitted for the annual Campus Accountability Report (CAR) and according to the detailed formula and terms defined in the Guidelines and Instructions for the Campus Accountability Report, which is available on the ACICS website. The detailed formula includes definitions, adjustments, and exclusions for calculating completers, graduates and withdrawals.

Home Institution. In a case where an institution collaborates with another entity for the delivery of distance education courses, “home institution” is the campus through which the student enrolls for the course. The Home Institution is responsible for assuring that accrediting standards are met, for providing on-campus services, and for clearly demonstrating through a formal Consortium Agreement the roles and responsibilities of the Home Institution and the Host Institution, which may deliver the distance education courses and specified online services. The Consortium Agreement must be approved by ACICS and must provide for evaluation visits to the Host Institution as may be required by ACICS.

ACICS expects the Home Institution to offer more than 50% of a program if courses are delivered under a distance education Consortium Agreement with an approved accredited institution, and to offer a minimum of 75% of a program if courses are delivered under a distance education Consortium Agreement with an approved unaccredited entity.

Host Institution. The institution which collaborates with an accredited institution in delivering distance education courses and specific online services as described in a formal Consortium Agreement approved by ACICS. The Consortium Agreement must provide for evaluation visits to the Host Institution as may be required by ACICS.

If the Host Institution is an approved unaccredited entity, it is subject to an evaluation visit once every three years as required by ACICS.

Humanities. See General Education (Humanities).

Hybrid Course or Hybrid Program. A hybrid course is one which mixes face-to-face, traditional classroom instruction with online instruction. A hybrid program is one which offers or requires a percentage of the required courses in a program online. ACICS requires the school to clearly outline the percentage of online activity included in a course or a program. Institutions are required to apply for and secure approval prior to initiating any distance education activity and also when it increases its distance education activity to the extent that it constitutes 50% or more of a program.

In-Service Training. Special planned and systematic experiences sponsored by an institution and related to curriculum and instruction that affect the majority of the faculty in a collective fashion. In-service education has as its major goal the updating of teachers in (1) subject matter, (2) curriculum concepts, (3) new theories and techniques of instruction, and (4) new educational media. The most common activity is a lecture by an outside speaker on a subject related to curriculum, the institution, or a societal issue.

Independent Study. Independent study involves a high level of independence and self-direction on the part of the student to read, conduct research, and complete written examinations, reports, research papers, and similar assignments designed to measure the student's grasp of the subject matter. Under the supervision of a faculty member, a learning contract signed by the student and institution shall be developed which outlines specific learning objectives, texts, supplemental readings, course requirements, evaluative criteria, and examination dates. Because independent study classes are the exception and not the rule, the number of courses that a student will be allowed to take independently should be limited.

Information Technology. Method or modes of delivering training, education, or research information via current or new tele-communications technologies, such as television broadcasts, closed circuit television systems, cable television, satellite transmissions, computers and computer-based access to external learning resources, videotape and interactive video disc, audio by disc, tapes or broadcasts, and other such information and telecommunications systems that alone or in combination assist in teaching and learning.

Institution. A main campus and any branch campuses of that main campus. As an institutional accreditor, ACICS accredits institutions as a whole and does not separately accredit individual campuses or programs. (See Title I, Chapter 3, Introduction)

Institution, Single Campus. An institution that provides educational programs at one main, free-standing campus. (See Sections 1-3-201 and 2-2-201)

Institution, Multiple Campus. An institution that provides educational programs at one main campus and one or more branch campuses. (See Section 1-3-202)

Institution, Distributed Enterprise. An institution that provides educational programs at multiple locations operating within the context of a well-established and highly centralized administrative system. (See Section 1-3-203)

Integrated Learning System or ILS. A network system that provides a complete package of curriculum, assessment capabilities, record keeping, and other aids to monitor and manage student learning activity.

Internship. See Externship.

Laboratory. A setting, usually with equipment, where students apply knowledge or instruction acquired in another setting, usually a class lecture or outside reading, to enhance skills and solve problems. Normally, two hours of work in a laboratory setting with an instructor present has the credit equivalency of one hour of classroom lecture.

Learning Management System or LMS. A system to manage courses created by a variety of publishers and providers. The LMS also helps the school manage online or distance education activity by providing critical reporting mechanisms.

Learning Object. An e-learning content module which is reusable, easily classified and stored in a data repository.

Learning Site. A learning site is a classroom extension of a main campus or branch campus that is apart from the managing location and is capable of providing sufficient academic and administrative oversight, providing access to all student services and instructional resources and maintaining academic quality. Learning sites used for delivery of distance education activity or collaborative arrangements with other entities for specific on-site educational activity must be approved by the Council on a case by case basis and are subject to a quality assurance visit as specified by the Council.

Lecture. A setting, usually a classroom, where a teacher instructs students in the theory, principles, or history of an academic or vocational subject. To maximally benefit from such instruction, a student is assumed to have done outside preparation. Two hours of preparation for each hour of lecture instruction are generally assumed.

Loan. An advance of money, generally evidenced by a promissory note, on the agreement to repay absolutely such advance, with or without interest.

Lower-Division Course. Generally, a survey course that includes an introductory overview of a particular area of knowledge. These courses often do not include a prerequisite for enrollment and frequently are offered to freshmen- and sophomore-level students. Lower-division courses usually carry course numbers in the 100-299 or 1000-2999 range.

Mathematics and the Sciences. See General Education (Mathematics and the Sciences).

Need-based Grant. An institutionally financed award to a student who demonstrates a need for financial assistance in order to participate in the educational program. Need-based grants must be made available to all students on the same terms.

Online Learning. A term used interchangeably with Internet-based Learning, Web-based Learning, or Distance Learning.

Outcomes. The effectiveness of an institution is determined by its outcomes. In determining effectiveness, institutions are required to evaluate the following outcomes: placement rates (in field, related field); graduate pass rates relative to minimum quantitative standards for state licensing examinations; employer satisfaction as determined by periodic surveys of those who employ graduates; graduate satisfaction as determined by periodic surveys of graduates; and student satisfaction as determined by periodic surveys of current students. Institutions also may use additional outcomes in evaluating effectiveness.

Placement Rate. The placement rate is a required element of the Campus Effectiveness Plan (see Section 3-1-111 of the Accreditation Criteria). The Placement Rate is defined by ACICS in terms of the total number of completers and graduates minus those who are not placed (employed) in their field of study or a related field of study, divided by the total number of completers and graduates. The placement rate is calculated at both the program and campus levels, based upon data submitted for the annual Campus Accountability Report (CAR) and according to the detailed formula and terms defined in the Guidelines and Instructions for the Campus Accountability Report, which is available on the ACICS website. The detailed formula includes definitions of in field and related field placement, adjustments, and exclusions for students not available for placement. Three years of placement rate data are required in the CEP, and the institution is required to define and publish goals for placement rates. ACICS also publishes standards for campus-level and program-level placement rates which accredited institutions are expected to meet or exceed. Institutions falling below Council standards are subject to planning requirements, monitoring, show cause directives or negative action including loss of program approval, campus inclusion or institutional accreditation.

Practicum. See Externship.

Professional Growth. The process by which employees gain knowledge and skills which enhance their expertise. Professional growth may be accomplished through a combination of the following activities: membership and participation in educational associations, professional organizations, continuance of education, concurrent related business experience, educational research, and awareness of current practices and standards.

Attendance at seminars, conventions, field visits, vendor shows, equipment exhibits, etc., are excellent opportunities for instructors to gain enrichment. Professional writing by an instructor is also an example of professional growth.

Program. A sequential grouping of courses which forms a considerable part, or all, of the requirements for an academic credential or an occupational objective. May refer to the total educational offering of an institution. See Curriculum.

Record, Permanent Academic. The official document on which is listed the courses attempted, grades and credit earned, and status achieved by a student.

Record, Student. A file which may contain the following: a record of the student's scholastic progress, the extracurricular activities, personal characteristics and experiences, family background, secondary school background, aptitudes, interests, counseling notes, etc.

Refund. Return of money, cancellation of obligation, or otherwise resolution of the debt.

Regular student. A student who is enrolled in a program leading to a certificate, diploma, or degree at an institution and is satisfactorily progressing toward program completion in compliance with the Standards of Satisfactory Progress as stated in Sections 3-1-420 through 3-1-423. Any other student attending the institution is considered in an extended enrollment status and is not eligible for government student aid.

Retention Rate. The retention rate is a required element of the Campus Effectiveness Plan (see Section 3-1-111 of the Accreditation Criteria). The Retention Rate is defined by ACICS in terms of the total student enrollment, minus those students who withdraw, divided by the total student enrollment and expressed as a percent. The retention rate is calculated at both the program and campus levels, based upon data submitted for the annual Campus Accountability Report (CAR) and according to the detailed formula and terms defined in the Guidelines and Instructions for the Campus Accountability Report, which is available on the ACICS website. The detailed formula includes definitions adjustments, and exclusions for calculating total enrollment and withdrawals. Three years of retention rate data are required in the CEP, and the institution is required to define and publish goals for retention rates. ACICS also publishes standards for campus-level and program-level retention rates which accredited institutions are expected to meet or exceed. Institutions falling below Council standards are subject to planning requirements, monitoring, show cause directives or negative action including loss of program approval, campus inclusion, or institutional accreditation.

Scalability. Provisions available for a computer application to handle expansions in size, volume, or number of users without undue disruption.

Self-paced Instruction. An educational delivery method by which a student progresses through a course or program of study in residence utilizing either computer software or instructional materials and resources. Students progress through the course or program at their own pace with limited interaction with the instructor. The instructor, however, is responsible for overseeing the progress of the student and for evaluating and grading the student.

Scholarship. (1) The quality of a student's achievement in the student's studies. (2) A financial award which does not involve repayment. A scholarship may be institutionally financed or funded by a third party. It is awarded by the institution in accordance with published standards which describe student qualifications and the source of funding. Reasons for the award may include one or more qualifications such as the student's performance (or potential for performance) in the educational program of the institution, financial need, talents sought or service valued by the institution or the third party.

Simulations. Computer applications that offer highly interactive options for the learner to practice skills, model, or role-play in realistic scenarios.

Social Sciences. See General Education (Social Sciences).

Student, Full-Time. A student who is enrolled in a minimum of 12 credit hours per term or its equivalent.

Student Learning Outcomes. Concise measurable statements of direct and indirect learning outcomes with assessments that specify what students will know, be able to do, or demonstrate as a result of a specific, planned education experience. Outcomes are expressed as measurable knowledge, skills, abilities, or attitudes.

Direct and Indirect Assessment of Learning Outcomes. See Direct Assessment Competency-based Programs for examples.

Syllabus. A description of how the course will be taught with a planned arrangement of materials and activities. The minimum requirements for a course syllabus consist of the title and course description, course number, course prerequisites and/or corequisites, instructional contact hours/credits, learning objectives, instructional materials and references, topical outline of the course, instructional methods, out-of-class learning activities and assignments, assessment criteria, method of evaluating students, and the date the syllabus was last reviewed. A course syllabus should be reviewed to ensure that it reflects the most recent trends, developments, and instructional materials for the specific subject areas. A current syllabus prepared and utilized by instructors in guiding and directing the learning experience of the students is necessary to ensure the quality of instruction.

Synchronous Interactions. Teaching/learning interactions between instructors and students which take place in real time or simultaneously through the use of various online technologies. These may include: virtual classrooms, audio- or videoconferencing, Internet teleconferences, etc.

Term. (1) A calendar unit. (2) Division of the school year during which an educational institution is in session; it may designate the summer term or may be used as a synonym for quarter, school term, semester, or trimester. Historically, a term has been any one of the two or three major periods during which classes were in session, specifically referred to as the fall term, spring term, etc.

Terminal Degree. The highest credential generally available in a discipline, which usually is an earned doctorate such as Ph.D., Ed.D., J.D., or D.B.A. In some disciplines, however, the master's degree is considered the terminal degree. Examples include the M.F.A., M.S.W., and M.L.S.

Threaded Discussions. Online classroom activity in which the instructor may post a series of messages on a particular topic and invite the students to participate in the discussion forum.

Transcript. A copy of the permanent academic (educational) record at an institution of higher education. It becomes an official transcript when the seal of the institution is affixed and the signature of an authorized person is appended.

Two-Year Institution. (1) Literally, an institution of higher education offering the first two years of college-level coursework. (2) In common usage a two-year institution is distinguished from a four-year institution and is characterized by offering at least two, but less than four, years of an organized curriculum. The curriculum may be of the transfer type (with credits normally transferable at full value toward a bachelor's degree), terminal-occupational, or open-ended. Two-year institutions include junior colleges, technical institutes, and semi-professional schools. In addition to organized curriculums, two-year institutions also may offer other types of instruction, e.g., courses in general education and adult education, short courses, and special lectures.

Upper-Division Course. Generally, a course that presents more specialized course content and is more rigorous than a lower-division course, and that often includes at least one prerequisite. Upper-division courses usually carry course numbers in the 300-499 or 3000-4999 range.

Validated Test. A nationally recognized, standardized or industry-developed test which consistently measures what it is designed to measure, e.g., ability of non-high school graduates to benefit from post-secondary education.

Videoconferencing. A teaching/learning activity which uses video and audio signals to communicate with student groups at diverse locations.

Webinar. A synchronous online conference in which the teacher or presenter may communicate with students via text, audio, video, electronic whiteboard and other devices. The event may include listener participation and archived for asynchronous delivery.

Withdrawal. The termination of a student's attendance in a class or in all classes before the end of the term.

**ACCREDITING COUNCIL FOR
INDEPENDENT COLLEGES AND SCHOOLS
(ACICS)**

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BYLAWS

ARTICLE I General Provisions and Definitions

Section 1–Name. The name of the corporation shall be the Accrediting Council for Independent Colleges and Schools, which corporation also is referred to herein as “ACICS” or “the Corporation”.

Section 2–Board of Directors. The governance and administration of the affairs of the Corporation shall be vested in a Board of Directors (sometimes referred to herein as the “Board”). The Board shall be constituted as provided in Article II.

Section 3–Council. The Council shall consist of elected and appointed commissioners.

Section 4–Recognition. ACICS shall be the body holding recognition from the U.S. Secretary of Education and any other appropriate recognition bodies.

Section 5–Directors. Directors are those persons serving on the Board of Directors.

Section 6–Commissioners. Commissioners are those persons elected by their peers or appointed by the Council to serve designated terms on the Council.

Section 7–Public Representatives. Representatives of the public are persons who are interested in career education; have knowledge or experience useful to the accreditation process; are willing to contribute opinion, advice, and expertise to the endeavors of ACICS and the Council; and are not (1) employed or formerly employed by an institution or program that either is accredited by the agency or has applied for accreditation or (2) associated as members of the governing board, owners, shareholders, consultants or in some other similar capacity with an institution or program that either is accredited by the agency or has applied for accreditation; or (3) a member of any related, associated, or affiliated trade association or membership organization; or (4) a spouse, parent, child or sibling of an individual identified in paragraph (1), (2) or (3) of this definition.

Section 8–Membership. Membership shall be institutional or organizational in nature and shall consist of accredited colleges, postsecondary schools, branchess, and other entities, all as defined in the Accreditation Criteria of ACICS.

Section 9–Offices. The main offices of ACICS shall be in the Washington, D.C., metropolitan area. ACICS may have other temporary or permanent offices to facilitate its work. The office of the Corporation’s registered agent shall be an office of ACICS.

Section 10–President. The President of the Accrediting Council for Independent Colleges and Schools shall be designated by the Board of Directors and shall be ACICS’s chief executive officer.

ARTICLE II

Board of Directors

Section 1–Composition. The Board of Directors shall be composed of the commissioners and the President. The President shall serve ex officio as a member of the Board and shall have no vote.

Section 2–Powers and Duties. Except as otherwise provided by law or in these Bylaws, the Board of Directors shall have the right and responsibility to manage and direct the affairs and exercise the powers of the Corporation. Responsibilities of the Board shall be to:

- (a) provide for an annual certified audit and management letter regarding all financial affairs of ACICS;
- (b) develop and approve an annual budget;
- (c) oversee revenues, expenditures, and investments;
- (d) monitor and coordinate external affairs, including government and consumer concerns;
- (e) assure canons of ethical business operations and personal conduct;
- (f) employ a chief executive officer whose title shall be President;
- (g) conduct an annual meeting of the membership of ACICS;
- (h) facilitate communication and coordination among the commissioners;
- (i) coordinate strategic planning, assess the effectiveness of the strategic plan, and take final action on the strategic plan;
- (j) assess the effectiveness of ACICS in fulfilling its mission and meeting its goals and objectives;
- (k) take all actions necessary to perform required functions of the Corporation; and
- (l) amend the Bylaws as provided for herein.

Section 3–Officers of the Board and officers of the Council. The officers of the Board of Directors shall be: Chair; Chair-elect; Secretary, by virtue of service as President; and Treasurer. The officers of the Council shall be: Chair and Chair-elect.

- (a) *Chair.* The Chair of the Council shall serve also as the Chair of the Board of Directors. The Chair shall preside over all meetings of the Board and of the Council and is responsible for seeing that policies established and actions taken by those bodies are carried out. The Chair will represent the Board and the Council in their dealings with governmental bodies, the press, and the public, and may sign or approve correspondence and other instruments.
- (b) *Chair-elect.* The Chair-elect of the Council shall serve also as Chair-elect of the Board. The Chair-elect assumes responsibilities as delegated by the Board; in the absence of the Chair, shall serve as Chair of the Board and of the Council; serves as Chair of the Nominating Committee; and shall serve as Chair of the Board and Council in the subsequent year.
- (c) *Secretary.* The President shall serve as the Secretary of the Board. The Secretary is responsible for preparing and maintaining custody of the minutes of all meetings of members, the Board, and the Council for the purpose of authenticating the records of the Corporation for each, for giving all notices required in accordance with these Bylaws, for receiving service in legal matters, and for performing all duties

customary to the office of Secretary. The Secretary shall have custody of the corporate seal and authority to affix the seal to any instrument requiring it.

- (d) *Treasurer.* The Treasurer shall be a Director and shall be elected by majority vote of the Directors present and voting at a duly constituted meeting of the Board. The Treasurer shall keep or cause to be kept complete and accurate accounts of receipts and disbursements and shall direct the President to ensure deposit of all moneys and other valuable property of the Corporation in such banks or depositories as the Board may designate. The funds, books, and vouchers under supervision of the Treasurer or other delegated persons, with the exception of confidential reports submitted by the members, shall at all times be subject to verification and inspection by the Board. The Treasurer shall serve on the Audit and Investment Committees of the Board of Directors. The Treasurer shall, at the annual meeting of members or by direct mail, report on the financial condition of the Corporation at least once annually.
- (e) *Additional Officers.* The Board may create positions of Assistant Treasurer and Assistant Secretary as necessary for the orderly conduct of business. When so authorized, the President shall appoint individuals from the professional staff to fill such offices and may assign appropriate duties to them. The President shall be responsible for filling all vacancies occurring in these positions.
- (f) *Terms.* Except as otherwise provided in these Bylaws, officers of the Board or the Council shall serve in office for one (1) year or until election of a successor or, if ex officio, as long as they hold the position which entitles them to serve as an officer of the Board or Council.

ARTICLE III

Council

Section 1–Composition. The Council shall consist of the elected and appointed commissioners generally representing member institutions, appointed commissioners-at-large, who are unaffiliated with a member institution and public representatives formerly employed at a public institution. It shall comprise fifteen (15) commissioners, at least five (5) of whom shall be elected by the membership and the balance of whom shall be appointed by the Council, and it shall include at least two academic representatives and at least two administrative representatives. Academic representative is defined as someone currently or recently directly engaged in a significant manner in postsecondary teaching and/or research. Administrative representative is defined as someone currently or recently directly engaged in a significant manner in postsecondary institutional or programmatic administration. At least three of the appointed commissioners shall be public representatives. Notwithstanding the foregoing, an elected commissioner may be replaced by an appointed commissioner for the remainder of the elected commissioner's term in the event of a vacancy.

Section 2–Powers and Duties. Responsibilities of the Council shall be to:

- (a) promulgate standards of accreditation and establish eligibility conditions, policies, and procedures for accreditation;
- (b) take final action on initial grants of accreditation;
- (c) take final action on denial, suspension, and withdrawal motions;
- (d) provide mechanisms for appeals and dispute resolution to ensure due process in resolution of conflicts between members and the Council;
- (e) provide to members appropriate accreditation-related services such as consultation, accreditation process workshops, and training opportunities for evaluators;
- (f) disseminate information on standards, procedures, and activities;

- (g) monitor compliance with the standards;
- (h) receive and act on other applications;
- (i) issue show-cause directives and place institutions on probation;
- (j) serve as liaison to recognition agencies or bodies;
- (k) issue a list of accredited colleges, schools, and organizations;
- (l) assess and collect fees from members;
- (m) take final action on the strategic plan; and
- (n) exercise other powers and duties incidental to the foregoing.

Section 3–Chair and Chair-elect. The Chair of the Council shall be the Chair-elect from the previous year. The Council shall elect the Chair-elect of the Council, who will become Chair in the subsequent year, annually by majority vote of the commissioners present and voting at a duly constituted meeting of the Council.

ARTICLE IV

Elections, Terms, Vacancies, Removal, Resignations, and Compensation

Section 1–Elections. Elections shall be held annually, in years when elected positions must be filled, for the selection of persons each of whom shall serve as elected commissioners on the Council and the Board. No person shall serve as a member of the Council and not of the Board, nor shall any person other than the President serve as a member of the Board and not of the Council.

Section 2–Eligibility for Election and Voting. Any person employed by a member institution in good standing and meeting other eligibility criteria is eligible to run for Council and Board membership. Each main and branch campus is entitled to one Designated Delegate who is authorized to vote in all elections on behalf of that member institution as well as, in all other matters requiring a vote of the members. Appointment of the Designated Delegate is made by the chief executive officer of the institution by notice in writing to ACICS. Multiple campuses under common ownership may be represented by one designated delegate, who shall be empowered to cast votes on behalf of each campus. Changes of Designated Delegate shall be made in writing at least fifteen (15) days prior to the date of any scheduled election, which becomes the record date for determining eligibility to vote. Results of elections shall be certified by the Executive Committee.

Section 3–Voting Procedures. Specific election procedures concerning candidate qualifications, deadlines for registration, dates and methods of balloting and absentee balloting shall be developed by the Board and may vary from election to election. Electronic voting, properly secured, shall be allowed. The following general procedures shall apply to all voting:

- (a) there shall be at least two candidates nominated for each elective position by the Nominating Committee;
- (b) nominations by petition for each elective position will be permitted if such petition (i) is received at least 45 days prior to the date of the election, (ii) contains the names and signatures of Designated Delegates representing at least ten percent of the institutions that are members of ACICS, (iii) demonstrates that the petitioner satisfies the eligibility requirements contained in Section 2 of this Article, and (iv) meets any other procedural requirements which may be established by the Board;
- (c) every member, if properly registered and current with financial obligations, shall have the opportunity to vote;

- (d) proxy voting is not permitted in elections;
- (e) no more than one person from any institution or group of institutions commonly owned, may serve at any one time on the Council;
- (f) voting on behalf of multiple members under common ownership and control by one Designated Delegate may be permitted on membership-wide matters. The multiple members represented by one Designated Delegate must be recorded with the Secretary prior to the vote, and the multiple members represented by a single Designated Delegate shall count toward a quorum;
- (g) only the Designated Delegate of each member is eligible to vote;
- (h) voting shall be by secret ballot, which includes secure electronic balloting;
- (i) a majority vote, unless otherwise provided by these Bylaws, shall decide all non-candidate matters; and
- (j) a plurality vote shall decide all candidate elections.

Section 4–Assumption of Office. New commissioners shall assume office on January 1 of the calendar year following election or appointment, unless otherwise provided for by the Council. Incumbent commissioners will remain in office until new commissioners are seated.

Section 5–Terms. Term of service as a commissioner shall be five years. A person elected or appointed to fill a term of less than two and one-half years is entitled to apply for nomination and election or appointment to a full term. Upon completion of a commissioner's term, the commissioner shall not be eligible to serve another full term through election or appointment until three (3) years have elapsed. However, a commissioner appointment to complete a vacated term, in full or part, is not subject to the three-year (3) waiting period. A commissioner who is elected to the Office of Chair-Elect in the final year of that commissioner's term shall have that term extended for one year to allow service as the Chair of the Council to be fulfilled. If nominated, public representatives may serve one additional appointment without the three-year waiting period.

Section 6–Vacancies. Where a vacancy exists, the Nominating Committee shall review and make recommendations to the Council for its consideration.

Section 7–Resignations. Resignation from service as a commissioner and Director may be voluntarily tendered at any time. The resignation becomes effective upon receipt of written notice by the Chair of the Board and Council or the President. Automatic tendering of resignation is required under the following circumstances or conditions:

- (a) denial, suspension, or revocation of accreditation at the institution with which affiliated;
- (b) cessation or announced cessation of operations at such institution;
- (c) filing for reorganization or bankruptcy by such institution or its parent corporation;
- (d) debarment by the U.S. Department of Education from employment at any institution participating in federal student funding programs;
- (e) indictment for a criminal offense;
- (f) change of control or ownership at the institution with which affiliated;
- (g) failure of such institution to meet its financial obligations to ACICS which results in loss of membership;
- (h) change in employment status (other than internal); and
- (i) change in Designated Delegate status.

Not all of the foregoing necessarily will result in acceptance of resignation but must be considered by the Council before service can continue.

Section 8–Removal. A commissioner may also be removed by not less than a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Council for breach of any code, canons, or tenets of ethics formally adopted pursuant to these Bylaws.

Section 9–Compensation. Commissioners shall serve without compensation. Public representatives shall receive honoraria for service in such amounts as the Board shall fix. Commissioners, as well as members of committees, if so provided in advance, shall be reimbursed for expenses incurred in performance of authorized duties.

ARTICLE V

Committees

Section 1–Standing Committees of the Council. There shall be the following standing committees of the Council:

- (a) *Nominating Committee.* The Nominating Committee shall be responsible for the screening of nominees and the selection of candidates for election as commissioners. It also shall identify persons qualified to be appointed as commissioners and recommend them to the Council for appointment. The Nominating Committee shall seek to maintain a Council that is generally representative of the types of member institutions.
 - (1) *Composition.* The Nominating Committee shall be appointed by the Chair of the Council and shall consist of five (5) members, at least four (4) of whom are current commissioners. Members representing both nondegree and degree granting institutions are encouraged. There shall be two (2) representatives from the Executive Committee of the Board of Directors and one (1) person from an ACICS-accredited institution who may or may not be a member of the Council. The Chair-elect of the Council and Board automatically serves as the Chair of the Nominating Committee.
 - (2) *Procedures.* The membership of ACICS shall be notified of the composition of the committee and invited to submit to it names of qualified nominees. The committee in its selection of candidates shall be mindful of diversity of programs, size and types of institutions, and geographic representation. It shall develop and publish eligibility criteria, permissible campaign practices by candidates, and any special voting procedures. Interviews of nominees by the committee are permitted.
- (b) *Business Practices Committee.* The Business Practices Committee shall consist of commissioners appointed by the Chair of the Council and Board. The mission of the committee is to identify and promote quality business practices of career colleges and schools, to ensure integrity and ethical relations, and to foster cooperation among institutions on behalf of students and others served.
- (c) *Education Enhancement and Evaluation Committee.* The Education Enhancement and Evaluation Committee shall consist of commissioners appointed by the Chair of the Council and Board. The mission of the committee is to establish standards for educational quality that assist institutions in mission fulfillment, program planning and development, institutional evaluation activities, and successful educational outcomes.
- (d) *Financial Review Committee.* The Financial Review Committee shall consist of commissioners appointed by the Chair of the Council and Board. The mission of the committee is to monitor the financial stability of accredited institutions in order to ensure they maintain sufficient financial resources to deliver a quality education to their students.

- (e) *Institutional Effectiveness Committee.* The Institutional Effectiveness Committee shall consist of commissioners appointed by the Chair of the Council and Board. The mission of the committee is to assist institutions in the improvement of their outcomes by establishing and assessing criteria for institutional effectiveness. In order to assist ACICS-accredited institutions to meet established standards, the committee shall review Campus Accountability Reports, Institutional Effectiveness Plans, and institutional outcomes and measurements.

Section 2–Standing Committees of the Board of Directors. There shall be the following standing committees of the Board:

- (a) *Executive Committee.* The Executive Committee shall consist of the Chair of the Board of Directors, who shall serve as Chair of the Executive Committee; the Chair-elect of the Board, who shall serve as Chair of the Executive Committee in the absence of the Chair of the Board; the Secretary; the Treasurer; and two additional Directors elected annually by majority vote of the Board. The Executive Committee acts on behalf of the Board and/or Council during the periods between Board and Council meetings. Accurate minutes of each Executive Committee meeting shall be maintained and shall be provided to the Board of Directors and/or Council at the next subsequent meeting of the Board of Directors or the Council. The Executive Committee's responsibilities shall be: between meetings of the Board and/or Council, act on issues requiring the timely attention of the Board or Council and assume such other duties as the Board of Directors or Council may from time to time delegate to the Executive Committee.
- (b) *Audit Committee.* The Audit Committee shall consist of a minimum of three members of the Board, including the Treasurer, as well as such other members as the Chair appoints. The committee shall work with the President to ensure an annual certified audit of the organization's financial activities is completed, that the findings of the audit are reviewed, and that actions are taken to address recommendations and areas of concern identified as part of the audit process.
- (c) *Investment Committee.* The Investment Committee shall consist of the President, a minimum of three other members of the Board, including the Treasurer, and such other members as the Chair appoints. The Investment Committee shall work with the President to provide oversight of ACICS's investment funds. The Investment Committee shall select investment advisors, develop an investment plan, and review investment reports at least annually.
- (d) *Governance Committee.* The Governance Committee shall consist of commissioners appointed by the Chair of the Council and Board. The mission of the committee is to ensure that ACICS operates within the construct of the Bylaws. The committee will evaluate and make recommendations for modifications to the Bylaws in response to proposed changes in standards or operational policies at ACICS.

Section 3–Other Committees. The Board of Directors may establish and appoint members to other ad hoc committees as deemed necessary.

ARTICLE VI

Membership, Fees, Meetings

Section 1–Gaining Membership. Membership in ACICS is voluntary and can only be obtained through accreditation. Members shall be institutions or organizations which provide education or training as heretofore defined. Each main or branch campus is entitled to all of the rights and privileges and assumes all of the obligations of membership as provided in these Bylaws. The term of membership shall be coexistent with accreditation.

Section 2–Loss of Membership. Any member that ceases to be accredited by ACICS shall automatically, and without the necessity for further action, be deemed to be removed from membership. Members may voluntarily resign, which also results in loss of accreditation. All obligations owed to ACICS, including payment of fees, shall be fulfilled prior to resignation. The loss of accreditation shall be retroactive to the date that all outstanding obligations had previously been fulfilled.

Section 3–Types of Fees. There shall be three types of fees: (a) annual sustaining fees, (b) user (or service) fees, and (c) late fees. The annual sustaining fee shall be scaled by formula to the annual educational revenue generated by each member. The user fees shall relate to the cost of services requested or the actions initiated by the members or applicants for membership. The late fees shall be established by the Council.

Section 4–Change in Fees. The Council may adjust the fees annually equivalent to the change in the national Consumer Price Index. Any increase above the CPI percentage shall be presented to the membership for approval.

Section 5–Conditions of Payment. Sustaining fees are due and payable on October 31. The Council may authorize a discount for sustaining fees received by September 30 each year. Nonpayment of annual fees by October 31 subjects a member to automatic loss of membership and loss of accreditation without a hearing. Any request for extension of time to pay or for a periodic payment plan must be received and approved prior to September 30. Payment plans will not extend beyond December 31. Institutions using periodic payment plans shall be assessed an interest rate of one and one-half percent (1.5%) per month on the unpaid balance. User fees must accompany the request for applicable service before the request will be processed.

Section 6–Proration of Fees. A member becoming eligible for membership during the first month of the fiscal year shall pay the full amount of the annual sustaining fees as applicable. Members becoming eligible during succeeding months shall pay a proportionate amount of the otherwise applicable fee as determined by the number of months remaining in the fiscal year, including the month in which membership is attained.

Section 7–Other Costs. In addition to fees herein described, costs of visits conducted by the Council will be invoiced to the institution.

Section 8–Assessments. The Council, upon a majority vote, may propose an assessment in addition to the annual sustaining fees provided for in this Article where there has occurred or is impending an emergency which may impair the ability of the Council to achieve its purposes and the amount of annual dues is insufficient to meet the Council's requirements. The proposed assessment shall be submitted to the members for approval or disapproval on majority vote.

Section 9–Annual Meeting. A meeting of the members shall be held annually at a date and place to be determined by the Board of Directors. The purpose of such meeting shall be the receipt of reports on the budget and finances of ACICS and its activities and affairs, and the transaction of other business as may be specified by the Board in the call for and notice of the meeting. The meeting may combine these business purposes with informational and educational sessions; meetings of the Board, the Council, commissions, or committees; and special events for the members.

Section 10–Special Meetings. Special meetings of the members may be called by the Board of Directors upon request of a majority of the Board or upon petition to the Board by not fewer than the lesser of fifty (50) members or ten percent (10%) of the membership not under common ownership or control.

Section 11–Notice of Meetings. Normally, members shall be notified at least thirty (30) days in advance of the date, location, time, and purpose of all meetings of the members. Waiver of notice may be recorded at any special meeting of the members by majority vote of a quorum present at such meeting.

Section 12–Quorum. Twenty percent (20%) of the members eligible to vote and represented by Designated Delegates shall constitute a quorum at a meeting of the members for the transaction of business, except that any issue not

properly noticed in the call for the meeting and that requires membership-wide participation may not be acted upon under new business. The Board of Directors may adopt such procedures as it deems necessary for the conduct of business. In the absence of an established procedure, Robert's Rules of Order shall apply.

Section 13–Meetings of the Council. The Council shall convene as often as necessary to review materials attendant to the accrediting process and to take formal action on the accredited status of applicants.

ARTICLE VII

Appeals Process

Section 1–Review Board of Appeals. A Review Board of Appeals shall be appointed by the Council. The purpose of the Review Board shall be to review, according to pre-established procedures and guidelines, appeals by members, of final negative actions by the Council and in each case either to affirm the action of the Council or to remand the case to the Council for further review, or to amend or overturn the action. The Review Board shall consist of fifteen (15) persons, all of whom have had experience in accreditation. The Review Board shall include at least two (2) academic representatives, two (2) administrative representatives, and three (3) public members, as defined in Article III, Section 1 herein. Review Board panels will consist of a minimum of three (3) members and be comprised of at least one (1) public, one (1) academic, and one (1) administrative representative. Members of the Review Board shall be appointed to terms of three years, with terms of initial appointees staggered so that one-third of the terms expire each year. A person appointed to the Review Board shall not have been a commissioner within one year prior to appointment. The President shall convene timely a panel of the Review Board when necessary.

Section 2–Due Process. Criteria promulgated by the Council shall ensure that institutions are provided a fair and reasonable opportunity to present reasons why denial, suspension, withdrawal, or other final actions taken by the Council are inappropriate and should be remanded for further consideration. The due process provided is an appeal to the Review Board, pursuant to the procedures described in 2-3-604. All appeals to the Review Board of Appeals shall be on the record and shall provide for the submission of briefs and oral testimony by institutional representatives.

ARTICLE VIII

Miscellaneous

Section 1–Liability. No applicant, member, or former member shall be liable for the debts of ACICS in any amount except to the extent of the fees required of each member pursuant to Article VI, Sections 3 and 8, hereof.

Section 2–Corporate Seal. The corporate seal shall be in such form as may be approved by the Board of Directors.

Section 3–Checks, Notes, Contracts. The Board of Directors shall determine the persons who will be authorized on the Corporation's behalf to sign checks, drafts, or other orders for payment of money; to sign acceptances, notes, or other evidences of indebtedness; to enter into contracts; or to execute and deliver other documents and instruments. These persons (positions) will be designated in the Board approved Governance Policy Document. The Board of Directors shall, at its discretion, require officers, agents, employees, and other persons so authorized pursuant to this Section to give security for the faithful performance of their duties.

Section 4–Books and Records. The Corporation shall keep at its office correct and complete books and records of the accounts and transactions of the Corporation and a current list of the members, directors, and officers of the Corpo-

ration. Such books and records may be in written form or in any other form capable of ready conversion to written form.

Section 5–Confidentiality. The Council shall maintain the confidentiality of the accrediting process with members insofar as permitted by accrediting criteria, law, and regulation. The Council shall have written policies on disclosure of information to third parties.

Section 6–Indemnification and Insurance. The Corporation shall indemnify and hold harmless each director, officer, commissioner, member of an appeals board, member of a visiting team, agent, employee, or other person acting on behalf of the Corporation or the Council against and from all loss, cost, and expense reasonably incurred by such person in the payment, defense, or settlement of any claim, suit, or proceeding brought against such person because they acted as part of or on behalf of ACICS, the Council, or the Review Board, as a director, officer, commissioner, member of an appeals board, member of a visiting team, agent, or employee. The rights specified in this Section shall apply whether or not persons continue to act in such capacity at the time the loss, cost, or expense is incurred. Such rights shall not apply in relation to any matters as to which any such person shall be finally adjudged to be liable for willful misconduct. The Board of Directors also may authorize the purchase and maintenance of insurance on behalf of such persons and the Corporation against any liability that arises from their actions in such capacities.

Section 7–Amendments. The Bylaws of the Corporation may be amended by the Board of Directors by majority vote of all the directors.

Section 8–Dissolution. ACICS shall use its funds only to accomplish the objectives and purposes set forth in these Bylaws, and no part of said funds shall inure or be distributed to the members of ACICS. On dissolution of ACICS, any funds remaining shall be distributed to one or more regularly organized and qualified charitable, educational, scientific, or philanthropic organizations to be selected by the Board of Directors.

Section 9–Fiscal Year. The fiscal year of ACICS shall be July 1 through June 30.

ARTICLE IX

Litigation, Jurisdiction and Venue, and Expenses

Section 1–Suits Against ACICS, Jurisdiction, and Exhaustion of Administrative Remedies. Jurisdiction and venue of any suit, claim, or proceeding relating to membership, accreditation, or accredited status, whether a claim for damages or injunctive or declaratory relief, brought by an accredited member, former member, or applicant for membership and accredited status against ACICS, the Council, the Review Board, or a commissioner, officer, committee member, Review Board member, or staff member acting in his or her official capacity shall only be in the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia, Alexandria Division, or the Circuit Court for the City of Alexandria, Virginia. Accredited members, former members, and applicants must exhaust all administrative remedies provided for in the ACICS Criteria and Bylaws before initiating any suit, claim, or proceeding in Court.

Section 2–Reimbursement of ACICS’s Litigation Expenses. An applicant for membership, member, or former member of ACICS shall reimburse ACICS for all costs and expenses (including attorney’s fees) actually and reasonably incurred by ACICS in defending any suit, claim, or proceeding, whether for damages or for injunctive or declaratory relief, brought by an applicant, member, former member, or one or more present or former students of any of the foregoing against ACICS, the Council, the Review Board, any commissioners of the Council, or members of the Review Board, or officers, employees, or agents of ACICS, the Council, acting in their official capacity, where ACICS, the Council, the Review Board, the commissioner, officer, employee, or agent shall have been adjudged to be the prevailing party in the suit, claim, or proceeding.

Section 3–Other Expenses. Each member shall reimburse ACICS for all costs and expenses (including attorney’s fees) incurred by it in the production of any of the Corporation’s, or the Council’s, records relating to such member in response to lawful requests from parties in litigation or from state or federal agencies.

Section 4–Binding Effect.

- (a) Each existing member and new member of ACICS shall be provided with a copy of these Bylaws. Acceptance or continuation of membership in ACICS shall constitute each member’s agreement to be bound by the provisions of these Bylaws, as they may be amended from time to time, while a member of and subsequent to the termination of membership in ACICS.
- (b) Each applicant for membership in ACICS shall be provided with a copy of these Bylaws. Application for membership in ACICS shall constitute such applicant’s agreement to be bound by the provisions of these Bylaws, as they may be amended from time to time, regardless of whether such applicant becomes a member of ACICS.

APPENDIX B Procedures and Guidelines for Unannounced Visits

UNANNOUNCED VISIT FACT SHEET

The Council, at its discretion, may direct an unannounced visit to occur at an institution about which it has received adverse information or when general operations of the institution may be called into question. This Fact Sheet is designed to assist the institution and the visiting team in conducting this visit as smoothly and efficiently as possible.

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, 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 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.

REPORT AND SUBSEQUENT ACTIONS

A report will be prepared and sent to the institution for response. If the institution is found to be operating in accordance with the *Accreditation Criteria*, no further action will be taken.

If the institution is found to be violating provisions of the *Accreditation Criteria*, the Council may direct the institution to show cause why its accreditation should not be withdrawn, or it may direct that a full team visit the institution to evaluate its correction of these violations.

EXIT CONFERENCE

At the conclusion of the visit, the team will meet with the chief administrator to discuss the visit and to answer any questions regarding the Council policies, procedures, and standards.

EXPENSES

A fee will not be assessed for this visit, but each institution will be billed for expenses incurred during the visit. Failure to remit payment for expenses may result in a directive to show cause why the accreditation of the institution should not be withdrawn.

INSTITUTIONAL PARTICIPATION

Any institution that refuses to undergo an on-site unannounced visit evaluation will be directed to show cause why its accreditation should not be withdrawn by suspension.

This Appendix 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. An accredited institution with branch campuses may publish a common catalog, but it should be specific as to the faculty, programs, and student services available at each location (see "Multiple-Campus Catalogs" in this Appendix). 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:

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).
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 3-1-516 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).
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).
23. If the institution is approved by the Council to offer direct assessment competency-based program(s), the catalog must include the following information:
- (a) a clear identification and listing of direct assessment competency-based program(s);
 - (b) a concise and clear description of how such programs are structured and administered; any special admissions requirements; how students will be expected to demonstrate achievement of competency goals; the types of academic and student services offered to assist students to pass the assessments; and how student achievements will be shown on the academic transcript;
 - (c) disclosure of the number of equivalent credit hours or clock hours and the general methodology the institution uses to determine the equivalencies;
 - (d) a clear description of how financial aid will be administered and disbursed for eligible students enrolled in such programs;
 - (e) disclosure of other entities or qualified individuals, in addition to the institution's faculty, engaged in the direct assessment process; and
 - (f) disclosure of the consequences or options available to students if they fail to demonstrate achievement of competency goals within a prescribed period of time.

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-CAMPUS CATALOGS

1. Pictures of the physical facilities of any of the institutions must be captioned to identify the particular campus depicted.
2. Faculty and administrative staff must be listed in the catalog and be clearly identified for each campus. The administrative staff of the institution also must be listed.
3. Any information contained in the catalog that is not common to all campuses in the group shall be presented in such a manner that no confusion, misunderstanding, or misrepresentation is possible.
4. 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 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 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.
3. Institutions advertising to attract students in classified columns of newspapers or the equivalent on websites and the other electronic publications 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. Testimonials used in advertising must reflect the opinions or experience of a current or prospective student or graduate of the institution. Testimonial messages 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 purposes in a manner that is misleading to prospective 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. The institution cannot make guarantee or similar claims regarding job placement or salary for graduates.
7. References to financial aid availability must use 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).”

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.

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.

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.

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 describes 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. 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.

If a student is not making satisfactory academic progress, the institution may place the student in an extended enrollment status. 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. For approved professional graduate programs, which require attainment of specified competencies and a licensure or certification, the institution has published and consistently follows an appropriate SAP policy.
17. If the institution is approved to offer direct assessment competency-based program(s), the institution must demonstrate that it has implemented appropriate policies that describe how it will measure whether a student enrolled in a competency-based program is making satisfactory academic progress. Policies and procedures must be implemented to identify in a timely manner when a student enrolled in such a program has withdrawn or changed enrollment status. The institution must maintain for Council review evidence that financial aid officers and others assigned to monitor satisfactory academic progress have been trained and are adequately monitored for implementing policies affecting competency-based programs.

In evaluating institutionally funded student aid, ACICS will consider the characteristics listed below. These characteristics are not listed in any priority order. Any institution whose aid program is not in accordance with any or all of these characteristics may be subject to a compliance warning. The greater the number of these characteristics evident in an institution's grant program, the greater the presumption of acceptability. ACICS will, however, review each institutional grant program in its entirety.

1. Grants are made from segregated funds or from identifiable funds which have been provided for in the institution's operating budget.
2. The percentage of students receiving institutionally funded grants, as compared to the overall student population of the institution, is not inordinately high.
3. The total amount for institutionally funded grants is publicly and clearly identified prior to the beginning of the academic year or term.
4. Institutionally funded grants may be awarded on the basis of student need or standards describing similarly circumstanced students.
5. The amount of institutionally funded grants is not based solely on the difference between the tuition charged and the amount of federal or state financial aid received.
6. The tuition charged reasonably and closely represents the cost to the institution of the instruction provided and does not significantly vary in amount from similar or same instruction in another certificate or degree program.
7. The amount of tuition retained as nonrefundable by the institution from those students who drop out prior to the end of the academic term or period is proportionally allocated between the institutionally funded grants and the federal and state financial aid received by the student.
8. The type and amount of institutionally funded needs-based grants is determined by an independent selection or review panel.

APPENDIX F Requirements for English as a Second Language Programs

This appendix consolidates information regarding the Council's 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 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 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 of Education regional office before applying for Council approval.

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 renewals 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 a 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.

APPENDIX H

Principles and Requirements for Nontraditional Education

SECTION I

DIRECT ASSESSMENT COMPETENCY-BASED PROGRAMS

Programs that are designed to prepare students for a specific profession or career are especially suited to be offered as direct assessment competency-based programs because such programs focus on what the students need to know, understand, or be able to do. The process utilized for the development of the curriculum, expected competencies, ways to directly assess such competencies and equate them to credit hours or clock hours (as required by the United States Department of Education as well as by the Council) demands active involvement of employers, as appropriate, and other experts in the discipline. Potential benefits gained by such programs are as follows:

- Allow students to progress at their own pace, but in compliance with the institution's satisfactory academic progress policy;
- Allow flexibility to motivated students;
- May potentially shorten the time for completion of the program;
- May potentially reduce overall cost of education; and
- May foster creativity for the institution, faculty and students in exploring cost-effective pathways to complete a program.

Federal Definition of Direct Assessment Competency-based Programs

A direct assessment program is an instructional program that, in lieu of credit hours or clock hours as a measure of student learning, utilizes direct assessment of student learning, or recognizes the direct assessment of student learning by others. The assessment must be consistent with the accreditation of the institution or program utilizing the results of the assessment.

Direct assessment of student learning means a measure by the institution of what a student knows and can do in terms of the body of knowledge making up the educational program. These measures provide evidence that a student has command of a specific subject, content area, or skill or that the student demonstrates a specific quality such as creativity, analysis or synthesis associated with the subject matter of the program. Examples of direct measures include projects, papers, examinations, presentations, performances, and portfolios.

ACICS Glossary of Definitions

Using the Federal definition as a guide, the Council has developed expanded definitions for Competency-based Programs and Direct Assessment Competency-based Programs. A longer list of examples of "direct" assessment measures is given in the Glossary. "Indirect" assessment measures, while deemed valuable for assessing institutional and program effectiveness, are not included in the consideration for the approval of competency-based programs.

For consideration of eligibility to participate in Title IV Federal Student Aid Programs, the Department of Education will consider only direct assessment competency-based programs.

Process for Review, Approval and Quality Monitoring Visits

Proposed initiation of a direct assessment competency-based program is classified as a substantive change and requires Council review and approval.

Institutions must submit Part I of the Application for Direct Assessment Competency-based Program, along with required supporting documents, for a preliminary review and Council action. A separate application is required for each program. The guidance document and instructions accompanying Part I of the application are designed to guide the institutions in gaining an idea of the types of direct assessment methods that are strongly recommended for professional and career-focused programs. The principles and requirements included in this Appendix will be applied in reviewing the application.

In considering the application, the Council will determine if the institution has demonstrated that it has used a rigorous process to identify what the student or graduate must know and be able to do to be considered “competent” by employers and experts in the field or discipline. In addition, the institution has demonstrated that it has developed robust direct assessment techniques and has explicitly described how it determines the equivalent number of credit or clock hours for the program.

Upon approval of Part I of the application by the Council, the institution will apply to the U. S. Department of Education for Title IV approval of the proposed direct assessment competency-based program.

Part II of the Application for Direct Assessment Competency-based Programs must be submitted to ACICS at least three months prior to the effective start date of the program. The approval letter will provide instructions on at least two quality monitoring on-site visits to the institution—the first visit will be conducted within six months of start of the program and a second follow-up visit will be conducted between 12 to 18 months of start of the program, depending upon the credential level of the program.

Institutional Mission and Institutional Readiness

- (a) The basis for the introduction of direct assessment competency-based programs must support the mission and objectives of the institution.
- (b) The structure and objectives of the program must clearly demonstrate that a systematic process was utilized in identifying and defining specific competencies related to the program. The process shall include participation of representation from employers, experts in the field, faculty, alumni and faculty.
- (c) The Campus Effectiveness Report must include a discussion of the proposed direct assessment competency-based programs—the rationale, overall structure, anticipated direct assessment methods engaged, plans for assessment and continuous improvement of the program, and adoption of best practices in competency-based education.

Admissions Requirements and Enrollment

Eligibility requirements for admission to direct assessment competency-based programs must be clearly defined, published and consistently applied. The institution is expected to develop objective mechanisms and standards for determining the potential characteristics of students who are best suited to pursue and complete the program.

Curriculum Development and Direct Assessment Measures

- (a) In the development of the curriculum, institutions must organize each course to enable students to clearly understand measurable learning objectives. Whenever possible, the Council encourages institutions to utilize standardized tests and industry-recognized licensure or certification examinations as direct assessment of student learning. Multiple direct assessment methods, which are student-centered, must be utilized where appropriate.
- (b) The syllabus for each course must be expanded to include clear learning objectives, student competency expectations, direct assessment techniques utilized by the faculty, criterion-based rating scales or rubric scores where appropriate, and the institution's systematic methods for determining credit hour or clock hour equivalencies. The syllabus must also clearly state how the student's progress will be monitored and how the final grades will be recorded.

Faculty and Instructional Support

Maximum support of the program faculty is essential to develop and implement this student-centered program. The institution must demonstrate that the faculty members are provided proper training, in-service and professional development activities to support this program. A rationale for faculty-student ratios must be developed. Adequate technology support must be provided as appropriate for faculty to monitor student progress and competency achievements.

Student Support Services

- (a) The institution must demonstrate that it offers strong student support services to assist students in achieving their competency goals. Mentors and student counselors must be trained to provide suitable support.
- (b) The institution must have a definite pathway for competency-based program students who may be advised to transition to a traditional fixed-schedule, teacher-directed format.
- (c) Academic advisors, registrars, career counselors, and financial aid counselors must be provided special training to provide support to the direct assessment competency-based program students.

Utilization of External Entities and Experts

- (a) If appropriate, the institution may utilize external entities and experts in providing a portion of the direct assessment competency-based program. The scope and nature of their involvement must be clearly outlined in a formal contract. The institution must demonstrate that it has sufficient academic control for the development and monitoring of the program. The contract must be approved by the Council prior to implementation.
- (b) If external entities and experts are utilized, the institution's faculty must provide more than 50 percent of the direct assessments of the competency-based program.

Continuous Program Assessment and Improvement

The institution must have adequate plans for the continuous assessment of the effectiveness of the program and provide for continuous improvement. These plans must be described in the Campus Effectiveness Plan.

Publications

Full and accurate disclosure of an approved direct assessment competency-based program must be provided in the institution's catalog and Web site. The catalog disclosure must follow the requirements as described and outlined in Appendix C, Item 23.

SECTION II

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 Section 2-2-106)
- (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 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 using procedures that are appropriate to the mode of delivery.
- (d) Institutions must designate a qualified individual to oversee the distance education activities.

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 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. (See Glossary definition of Syllabus.)

- (b) The course must provide sufficient and appropriate opportunities for interaction between faculty and students and among students.
- (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/externship 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/or experientially credentialed faculty to teach online courses appropriate to the subject matter.
- (b) 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 instruction must provide an accessible and reliable learning management system and technical support to effectively facilitate online instruction and learning.
- (d) The institution must demonstrate that the student/teacher ratio appropriately supports faculty and student interaction, facilitation of interaction among students and 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) 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 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, including but not limited to student services such as counseling, academic advising, financial aid, and employment assistance.

Student Evaluation and Program Assessment

- (a) 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.
- (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).

SECTION III

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

- (a) Institutions must notify and receive approval from ACICS prior to using self-paced as a mode of delivery. (See Section 2-2-106)
- (b) Institutions must demonstrate a shift from a teacher-centered to a learner-centered environment.
- (c) Institutions must employ faculty who possess the technical skills to teach in a self-paced environment.
- (d) 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

- (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. (See Glossary definition of Syllabus.)
- (b) 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/externship formulas for credit calculations (See Section 3-1-516, Course and Program Measurement).
- (c) Institutions must demonstrate compliance with applicable federal and state regulations.

Faculty and Instructional Support

- (a) The institution must employ academically and/or experientially credentialed faculty to oversee the self-paced course/program.

- (b) The faculty must be adequately trained to instruct in a self-paced environment.
- (c) The faculty must be supported with the appropriate education resources and technology to facilitate self-paced instruction.
- (d) 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

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

- (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 student services such as counseling, academic advising, financial aid, and employment assistance.

Student Evaluation and Program Assessment

- (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.

APPENDIX I

Principles and Guidelines for International Partnership Agreements

In addition to the general standards in Section 2-2-507; Title III, Chapter 1, which apply to all institutions, and applicable standards in Chapters 2 through 7, the following standards apply specifically to institutions proposing to initiate an international partnership agreement with an entity outside the United States or its territories.

The programs and/or courses offered abroad must be consistent with the institution's educational mission and goals and must meet the same academic standards, educational effectiveness and student achievement.

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 an International Partnership Agreement (IPA).

The partnership agreement should include the following items and detail each entity's responsibility in the following areas:

ELEMENTS IN AN INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT

- I. Duration and Jurisdiction
 - 1. Institutions must identify the start and end date of the agreement.
 - 2. The agreement must list the signatories/partners involved in the international partnership.
 - 3. The agreement must describe under which jurisdiction(s) the agreement will legally be bound, i.e. legal jurisdiction of ACICS institution.
- II. Administration of the International Partnership Activity
 - 1. Institutions must identify the individual with the overall responsibility for the activity.
 - 2. Institutions must identify the on-site administrator for the activity.

CURRICULUM CONTENT, INSTRUCTION, AND DELIVERY

Institutions shall ensure the quality and rigor of courses/program offered through the international partnership agreement.

- III. Faculty and Instructional Support
 - 1. Institutions must employ academically and experientially credentialed faculty to oversee the instruction, evaluation, and grading requirements of the courses/ program.
 - 2. Institutions must have faculty credentials evaluated by a recognized service for evaluation of foreign credentials.
 - 3. The faculty must be supported with the appropriate education resources and technology.
- IV. Admissions Procedures and Requirements

The institution must identify the admission requirements for enrolling in courses/programs abroad.

VI. Students and Student Services

1. Advising and Counseling

- (a) Institutions must provide academic advising and counseling services to students.
- (b) Institutions must have procedures for adding and dropping courses.

2. Financial Aid

If applicable, institutions shall detail the institution's procedure for awarding, disbursing, and counseling students on financial aid funds that will be used for overseas study.

3. Transfer of Credit

Institutions must in compliance with Section 3-1-413 as it relates to transfer of credit.

4. Student Orientation

The institution must provide pre-departure orientation and on-site orientation programs for students, if applicable.

5. Grievance Procedure

A grievance policy and procedure must be included in the catalog and list name and address of ACICS, unless published in a student handbook.

6. Student Records

The institution must provide a plan for storing student records and providing access to on-site administrator at the international location.

7. Student Accommodations

Institutions should detail the plan for arranging student accommodations during the study abroad period, if applicable.

VII. Security

- 1. Institutions must describe how student, staff and faculty safety at the international education facility will be ensured.
- 2. Institutions must describe the plan to ensure security of students, staff and faculty in case of civil unrest or natural disaster in host country.

VIII. Financial Requirements

Institutions must be in compliance with Section 3-1-430 as it relates to financial aid, tuition and charges.

IX. Resources and Equipment

Instructional resources and equipment must be readily available, accessible, and reliable.

X. Student Evaluation and Program Assessment

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

XI. 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.

XII. Termination of Agreement and Teach-out Plan

Institutions must detail the plan for completion of program or courses should international partner fail to provide services.

XIII. International Site Facilities

Institutions must include a description of facilities at the international site and provide evidence that the facilities are in compliance with host country building code regulations.

Summary

ACICS members planning to enter into an international partnership agreement must be aware of and in compliance with all Council requirements and Department of Education regulations.

International demands for post-secondary education provide opportunities for member institutions to expand the geographic footprint of their education delivery infrastructure, through on-line, on-ground and combinations of those and other modalities. Regardless of the education delivery infrastructure utilized at an international location, the institution is expected to operate in compliance with ACICS standards as demonstrated through direct monitoring of administrative operations, instruction, student services and the comparable full array of processes that apply to all institutions accredited by ACICS.

The standards and guidelines below will be applied to institutions that offer education or study abroad activities at international locations under the ACICS grant of accreditation. They are designed to apply Council expectations for effectiveness and integrity to programs that primarily lead to employment in professional, technical and occupational fields, regardless of the geographic location of the education or study abroad activity, or the modality with which the education is delivered. Council acknowledges education or study abroad may serve to enhance the interpersonal and developmental aspects of the student, including an improved ability to relate to and work with people from different cultures and ethnic, linguistic and national backgrounds. Council also acknowledges that education or study abroad, as part of a comprehensive career education program, may be directly applicable to the workplace and contribute to a graduate's success in finding placement in an organization with a multinational employee profile that utilizes multinational vendors and suppliers. Finally, the Council authorizes the utilization of education or study abroad, under the parameters prescribed in this section, in recognition that structured education or study abroad may enhance the graduate's ability to compete for job placement with international employers.

A key principle of ACICS standards regarding education or study abroad is that the accredited institution must demonstrate that the quality of the education derived from locations outside of a student's home country is comparable to that received at its domestic accredited locations. The burden of proof lies with the institution, regardless of the form of education or study abroad.

1. ***Education or Study Abroad Activities:*** For all education or study abroad activities, other than those performed through a formal partnership agreement with an international institution, a U.S.-based institution is required to host a comprehensive Forum review and provide the final determination letter demonstrating substantial conformity with the Forum's standards, contained in the document, "Standards for Good Practice of Education Abroad (SGPEA)", published by the Forum on Education Abroad (<http://www.forumea.org/standards-standards.cfm>); the requirements for maximum length of study as defined in #2 (below); and the academic residency requirement as described in #3 (below). For those education or study abroad activities performed through a formal partnership agreement, the IPA requirements apply. (Section 2-2-510; Appendix I) International institutions accredited by ACICS located outside the U.S. that are planning to initiate education or study abroad activities must disclose the nature and scope of such activities in writing to ACICS and seek prior approval.
2. ***Maximum of Length of Education or Study Abroad Activity:*** No more than 50 percent of a program's coursework may be completed through education or study abroad activities, including transfer credit, challenge examinations and other sources. An education or study abroad program may not exceed an equivalent of two semesters in length.
3. ***Academic Residency:*** Students admitted to an education or study abroad program are those who must have satisfactorily completed a minimum of one full-time equivalent semester or quarter or trimester, on-line or on-site through the home institution. Additionally, education or study abroad students are required to complete a minimum one full-time equivalent semester or quarter or trimester on-line or on-site through the home institution following completion of the education or study abroad activity and prior to completion of the credential.

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Criteria Revisions

The following criteria have been accepted as final with the modified date noted (new language is underlined, deleted language is struck):

Section	Criteria Revision	Date Modified
2-3-200 – ACCREDITATION DEFERRED OR <u>CONDITIONED</u>	When Council determines there is insufficient evidence available to make a decision, they may defer action until a later date pending receipt of additional information. In such cases, the Council will provide in writing the reasons for the deferral, state what the institution needs to provide with sufficient time for the institution to respond, and specify the response date. Based on the nature and/or number of identified deficiencies, the Council may require attendance of key administrators at a workshop and/or consultation.	1/1/2016
2-3-210. Deferral.	Deferral is, in effect, “no action at this time” and is not a negative action. Therefore, deferral is not an appealable action. Neither is a deferral a final action. In all cases of deferral on reevaluation of accredited institutions, the Council will extend the present grant of accreditation for a period sufficient for the institution to provide the information needed: including time for procedural due process following the Council’s review of the information not to exceed twelve months, if the longest program is less than one year in length; eighteen months, if the longest program is at least one year, but less than two years in length; and two years, if the longest program is at least two years in length.	
2-3-220. <u>Compliance Warning.</u>	<p><u>When the Council determines that an institution is not in compliance with the Accreditation Criteria, the Council will issue a compliance warning. The institution will be provided in writing with the areas of noncompliance and will be required to demonstrate corrective action for review by ACICS.</u></p> <p><u>A show-cause directive or a denial action/suspension order may be issued by ACICS as the result of this review as described in Section 2-3-230 or 2-3-402. Following receipt of a compliance warning, the institution must bring itself into compliance within the time frames specified in Title II, Chapter 3, or the institution will be subject to a final adverse action.</u></p> <p><u>When the reasons for the compliance warning are satisfied, the action may be lifted either by the President in cases where no evaluation is involved or by the ACICS Council in cases where evaluation of additional material is required and following such evaluation.</u></p>	1/1/2016

Section	Criteria Revision	Date Modified
2-3-403230. Show-Cause Directive.	<p>When the Council determines that an institution is not in compliance, and is unlikely to become in compliance, accreditation of an institution is subject to suspension action (other than summary suspension under Section 2-2-301) because the Council determines has reason to believe that the institution is not, or may not be, in compliance with the <i>Accreditation Criteria</i>, the institution will be provided in writing with the alleged deficiencies areas of noncompliance and will be invited to “show cause” why its accreditation should not be suspended or otherwise conditioned.</p> <p>A show-cause directive is not a negative or conditioning action. Rather, it is issued to an institution for it to come forward and prove that a negative or conditioning action should not be taken. However, tThe opportunity to show cause before the Council will be considered to be a hearing as defined in Section 2-3-500. A suspension order or denial action may be issued by ACICS as the result of this hearing, and such action is considered a final action which may only be appealed to the Review Board of Appeals as described in Section 2-3-600. Following receipt of a show-cause directive, the institution must bring itself into compliance within the time frames specified in Title II, Chapter 3, or the institution will be subject to final adverse action.</p> <p>In many circumstances, it is possible for an institution to respond to a show-cause directive in writing by which it demonstrates correction of the condition upon which the directive was based. When the reasons for the show-cause are satisfied, the directive may be lifted either by the President in cases where no evaluation is involved or by ACICS in cases where evaluation of additional material is required and following such evaluation. All institutions directed by the Council to show cause why their accreditation should not be suspended or otherwise conditioned will be directed to submit a school closure plan and may be required to submit a teach-out agreement as described in Section 2-2-303 of the <i>Accreditation Criteria</i>.</p>	1/1/2016
2-3-800240 – PROBATION	Probation is a status that the Council may impose on an institution if the institution is unable to demonstrate that it consistently operates in accordance with the <i>Accreditation Criteria</i> .	1/1/2016
2-3-801241. Imposition.	Probation may be imposed by the Council either when it continues a show-cause directive after at least one hearing either in person or in writing, or after an institution has notified the Council that it intends to appeal a denial action.	1/1/2016
2-3-802242. Result of Probation.	The Council will not accept any applications for new programs or new campuses from any institution on probation unless the institution receives approval in advance to submit such an application.	1/1/2016
2-3-803243. Probation Lifted.	Probation does not expire automatically. Instead, the institution is obligated to demonstrate to the Council that the conditions or circumstances which initially led to the imposition of probation have been corrected before probation will be lifted. Probation may be continued even if the show-cause directive has been vacated. The Council may order a special visit at the institution’s expense before lifting probation.	1/1/2016
2-3-804244. Notification of Probation.	The Council will notify the U.S. Secretary of Education, appropriate state regulatory agencies, other appropriate accrediting agencies, and the public of its decision to place an institution on probation. The institution is required to notify immediately in writing its current and prospective students that it has been placed on probation by its accrediting agency.	1/1/2016

Section	Criteria Revision	Date Modified
	2-3-300 – Accreditation Denied ...	1/1/2016
	2-3-400 – Accreditation Withdrawn ...	
	2-3-404403. Procedural Guarantees <u>for Withdrawal by Suspension</u>	
	2-3-900800 – Special and Fact Visits ...	
	2-3-1000900 – Debarment ...	
2-1-300. Renewal of Accreditation.	It is the responsibility of the institution to file an application and remit the appropriate fees for a renewal of accreditation by September 30th of the year prior to the last year of the grant of accreditation. This also involves submission of the institution's renewal self-study, with supporting documents. Institutions that have not submitted a renewal self-study by December 1st of the year preceding expiration of the grant, and have not requested and received an appropriate extension or notified the Council of intent to voluntarily withdraw its accreditation, may be <u>issued a compliance warning</u> directed to show cause why its accreditation should not be withdrawn, suspended, or otherwise conditioned....	1/1/2016
2-1-807. Program Length and Tuition and Fees.	ACICS will determine average program lengths and tuition and fees annually based on information collected in the Annual Accountability Reports and will provide these data to all accredited institutions. Institutions with program lengths that are more than one standard deviation from the average will be required to submit an explanation for the deviation. If the Council does not accept the explanation, it may require a consultation between ACICS and the institution, direct an on-site evaluation, issue a <u>show-cause directive compliance warning</u> , or withhold inclusion of the program from the institution's current grant of accreditation.	1/1/2016

Section	Criteria Revision	Date Modified
2-1-808. Financial Review.	The Council reviews the Annual Financial Report, audited financial statements, and other relevant information to monitor each institution's financial condition. When this review indicates that an institution's financial condition may be weak or deteriorating, the Council will require the institution to furnish Quarterly Financial Reports, a Financial Improvement Plan, or other interim narrative reports that demonstrate the actions the institution is taking to improve its financial condition. If the Council determines the institution no longer complies with the Council's requirements for financial stability, the Council will <u>issue a compliance warning</u> , issue a show-cause directive, or otherwise take negative action and require the institution to demonstrate compliance within the time frames de-scribed in Title II, Chapter 3. These time frames may be extended at the sole discretion of the Council for good cause, including evidence that there has been significant improvement in the deficient area(s) and the applicable time frame does not provide sufficient time to demonstrate full compliance, e.g., significant improvement in financial stability. Institutions that are required to submit interim financial reports or that are determined to be out of compli-ance with the Council's standards for financial stability are considered to be on financial review and are subject to additional restrictions regarding the initiation of branches and learning sites.	1/1/2016
2-2-121. Changes to Existing Programs.	<p>Changes to existing or currently approved programs fall under (a) extensive changes and (b) non-substantive changes.</p> <p>(a) Extensive Changes. An extensive change to existing program application process must be initiated and approval received prior to implementation. Failure to do so will result in a <u>show-cause action compliance warning</u> for offering an unapproved program. The following changes will be considered substantive changes to the institution's scope of accreditation and require approval per Section 2-2-100 Substantive Changes:</p> <p>(i.) A 25% increase in the number of clock or credit hours awarded for successful completion of an existing program.</p> <p>(ii.) a change from clock hours to credit hours</p>	
2-3-700 – Complaints and Adverse Information	<p>...</p> <p>The role of the Council in resolving complaints and investigating adverse information is to determine whether the institution is out of compliance with one or more accrediting standards to which the complaint is addressed or to which the adverse information applies. After such determination, ACICS may then do one of the following:</p> <p>(a) dismiss the complaint or terminate further investigation of the adverse information;</p> <p>(b) postpone a final action on the complaint or adverse information if there is evidence that the institution is making progress to rectify the situation or if more investigation is necessary; or</p> <p>(c) notify the institution that, on the basis of information available, ACICS has determined that the institution is failing to comply with the Accreditation Criteria and that the institution is:</p> <p>(i) <u>issued a compliance warning</u></p> <p>(ii) directed to show cause why its accreditation should not be suspended, revoked, or otherwise conditioned;</p> <p>(iii) directed to submit a report to ACICS detailing plans for rectifying the area(s) of noncompliance; or</p> <p>(iv) directed to undergo a special on site evaluation..</p> <p>The Council will inform the complainant of the determination by the Council and the disposition of the complaint.</p>	1/1/2016

Section	Criteria Revision	Date Modified
Appendix E – Guidelines for Institutionally Funded Student Aid	<p>In evaluating institutionally funded student aid, ACICS will consider the characteristics listed below. These characteristics are not listed in any priority order. Any institution whose aid program is not in accordance with any or all of these characteristics may be subject to a <u>compliance warning</u> directive by ACICS to show cause why its grant of accreditation should not be suspended, revoked, or otherwise conditioned. The greater the number of these characteristics evident in an institution's grant program, the greater the presumption of acceptability. ACICS will, however, review each institutional grant program in its entirety.</p> <p>...</p>	1/1/2016
3-7-502. Assignments.	<p>Faculty shall be assigned in terms of their major and minor areas of academic preparation and related experience. The size of the faculty shall be appropriate for the enrollment. All doctorate program faculty should have appropriate graduate and terminal degrees. All courses are to be taught by faculty possessing terminal degrees. Professional certification is not a substitute for a terminal degree. The institution also should encourage faculty members to engage in practical or scholarly research and to publish in professional journals.</p> <p>The principal faculty members must possess doctoral/terminal professional degrees from accredited institutions. These individuals also must demonstrate expertise in the field of study taught and possess applicable experience in participating in a doctorate degree program.</p> <p><u>All doctoral degree courses shall be taught by faculty possessing doctoral or terminal professional degrees, related to the courses taught, from accredited or government-recognized international institutions. These individuals also must demonstrate expertise in the field of study taught, possess applicable professional experience for participating in a doctoral degree program and maintain current professional certification in their discipline, where applicable.</u></p> <p><u>Faculty shall be assigned in terms of their major and minor areas of academic preparation, related professional experience, and appropriate required professional certification to practice in the field. The size of the faculty shall be appropriate for the enrollment in the program. The institution shall demonstrate that faculty members are engaged in practical or scholarly research and are encouraged to publish in professional journals.</u></p>	1/1/2016

Section	Criteria Revision	Date Modified
2-2-110. Evaluation, Approval and Monitoring of Substantive Change Activity.	<p>All activity for which approval is sought will be evaluated by ACICS before approval is granted. Following is a description of those evaluations.</p> <p>(a) <i>Branch Campus</i>. Initial inclusion of a branch campus within the scope of the accreditation of the institution may be granted by the President upon receipt of all required information. An institution proposing the initiation of a new location must follow the procedures as outlined by the Council and disclosed on its website. A new location must receive initial inclusion before advertising, recruiting, or enrolling students at the proposed location. The Council reserves the right to require a preliminary visit to any potential branch campus prior to the granting of initial inclusion.</p> <p>A branch campus that is granted initial inclusion by the President 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 to submit additional information to satisfy areas of concern identified during the evaluation.</p> <p>A decision regarding the final inclusion of a branch campus 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 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.</p> <p>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 a branch campus 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.</p> <p>(b) <i>Learning Site</i>. The President is authorized to evaluate and approve additions to a main or branch campuses that are apart from the primary location of that campus. Educational activities at a learning site are eligible to be evaluated for inclusion within the scope of the accreditation of the managing campus provided that the learning site has been established to meet a specific educational need or condition and is authorized by the appropriate governmental education authority, if applicable.</p> <p>The managing campus proposing the initiation of a learning site must submit a Learning Site Application. The managing campus must assure the Council that the educational activities at the learning site complement the overall objectives of the institution. Based on its review of the application materials, ACICS may (1) grant final inclusion of the learning site or (2) deny the application.</p> <p>A learning site that is granted final inclusion by the President 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.</p> <p>All additions to the campuses of an institution are evaluated during an institution's regular evaluation for a renewal of accreditation.</p>	1/1/2016

Section	Criteria Revision	Date Modified
2-3-1000 – Debarment	<p>The Council may bar a person <u>or entity</u>, including spouses and closely related family groups as defined in Section 2-2-401, from being an owner, or senior administrator manager, or governing board member of an ACICS-accredited institution if that person <u>or entity was found guilty of fraudulent or criminal behavior, was debarred by a government agency or an accrediting agency, or</u> was an owner, or manager <u>senior administrator, or governing board member</u> of an institution that lost its accreditation as a result of a denial or suspension action or that closed without providing a teach-out or refunds to students matriculating at the time of closure.</p> <p>The Council will notify the a person, or person(s) <u>or entity</u> whom it intends to bar as the result of denial or suspension action within four months following the loss of the institution's accreditation. It will notify the a person, or person(s) <u>or entity</u> whom it intends to bar as the result of the closing of an institution within a reasonable period of time following the closure; normally not more than six months following the closure of the institution. In each case, the Council will forward an intent to bar notice by both express <u>electronic and first-class certified</u> mail to the last institutional mailing address known to the Council, unless the Council has received updated mailing information following the institution's closure or loss of accreditation. Those individuals <u>or entities</u> will be considered notified when the Council has forwarded the intent to bar notice in accordance with these procedures.</p> <p>The intent to bar notice will inform the person(s) or entity that they are entitled to present information and materials in writing or in person to challenge the intent to bar at the next scheduled meeting of the Council. The notice will stipulate that if they intend to challenge the intent to bar, the person(s) <u>or entity</u> must inform the Council office in writing within ten days of receipt of the notice as to whether they desire a personal appearance before the Council, or whether they will challenge the intent to bar in writing. A debarment order may be issued by the Council as a result of its consideration of the facts presented. Notice of the Council's decision will be sent to the individual(s) by electronic and first-class and certified mail within ten days following their challenge before the Council.</p> <p>The Council retains final discretion to establish the terms and length of the debarment. The length of debarment will vary depending on the circumstances that led to the debarment decision, but it typically will be for a period of at least one year and not more than three years. Individual circumstances may justify a longer period of debarment.</p> <p>A person or Person(s) <u>or entities</u> barred by the Council may appeal this decision to the Council in accordance with such debarment appeals procedures as the Council may establish. The Council's decision is final if the person <u>or entity</u> elects not to appeal <u>within ten days of Council notification</u> or if the Council affirms its decision following appeal, and no additional appeal rights are available under these procedures.</p> <p>After considering an individual or entity's challenge to the intent to bar or when no challenge is presented, the Council's decision to bar an individual is final. No appeal rights are available under these procedures.</p>	4/9/2015
2-1-809. Student Achievement Review.	<p>The Council reviews the Campus Accountability Report (CAR) and Institutional Accountability Report (IAR) to monitor performance in terms of student achievement at both the campus and program levels. Measures will include retention; placement; and licensure pass rates, if applicable. When this review indicates that <u>student</u> achievement is <u>below Council standards</u>, the Council will require the institution to add an Improvement Plan within its Campus Effectiveness Plan (CEP) and/or Institutional Effectiveness Plan (IEP). If the Council determines the institution no longer complies <u>is out of compliance</u> with the Council's requirement for student achievement, the Council will issue a <u>Compliance</u> Warning a show-cause directive, or otherwise take action and require the institution to demonstrate compliance <u>with the next year's CAR submission, the time frames described in Title H, Chapter 3. These</u> This time frames may be extended at the sole discretion of the Council for good cause, including evidence that there has been significant improvement in the deficient area(s) and the applicable time frame does not provide sufficient time to demonstrate full compliance, e.g., improvement in retention, placement, or licensure pass rates.</p>	4/9/2015

Section	Criteria Revision	Date Modified
2-3-200 Accreditation Deferred	<p>When Council determines an institution is measured against the criteria and is found to be in marginal compliance, or there is insufficient evidence available for the Council to make a decision, ACICS may they may defer action until a later date pending receipt of additional information. In such cases, ACICS the Council will provide in writing the reasons for the deferral, state what the institution needs to provide, provide sufficient time for the institution to respond and invite a response to the findings by a specify the response date. <u>Based on the nature and/or number of identified deficiencies, the Council may require attendance of key administrators at a workshop and/or consultation.</u></p> <p>Deferral is, in effect, “no action at this time” and is not a negative action. Therefore, deferral is not an appealable action. Neither is a deferral a final action. In all cases of deferral on reevaluation of accredited institutions, the Council will extend the present grant of accreditation for a period sufficient for the institution to provide the information needed, including time for procedural due process following the Council’s review of the information not to exceed twelve months, if the longest program is less than one year in length; eighteen months, if the longest program is at least one year, but less than two years in length; and two years, if the longest program is at least two years in length.</p>	4/9/2015
Bylaws ARTICLE IV Elections, Terms, Vacancies, Removal, Resignations, and Compensation	<p>Term of service as a commissioner shall be five years. A person elected or appointed to fill a term of less than two and one-half years is entitled to apply for nomination and election or appointment to a full term. Upon completion of a commissioner’s term, the commissioner shall not be eligible to serve another <u>full</u> term through election or appointment until three (3) years have elapsed. <u>However, a commissioner appointment to complete a vacated term, in full or part, is not subject to the three-year (3) waiting period.</u> However, a <u>A</u> commissioner who is elected to the Office of Chair-Elect in the final year of that commissioner’s term shall have that term extended for one year to allow service as the Chair of the Council to be fulfilled. If nominated, public representatives may serve one additional appointment without the three-year waiting period.</p>	4/9/2015
3-1-500 – EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES	<p><u>The major index of an institution’s quality is the effectiveness of its educational program. The educational program must be consistent with the stated mission, be adequate in breadth and context to achieve it, and produce measurable results. Its educational activities, whether residential or otherwise and whether group or individually oriented, shall include definable instruction, interaction, and evaluation. A second index of institutional quality is the resources available to instructors and students.</u></p> <p><u>The third index of an institution’s quality is the competence of its faculty. The effectiveness of any institution depends upon contemporary teaching strategies and practices and upon the knowledge, ability, and commitment of its faculty. The selection, orientation, guidance, stimulation, and evaluation of the teaching staff are among the most significant responsibilities of the administration. The faculty should actively participate in developing the total educational program of the institution.</u></p>	1/1/2015

Section	Criteria Revision	Date Modified
3-1-501. Faculty Involvement in Academic Governance.	<p><u>The faculty shall have a clear responsibility, distinct from that of developing institutional policy, to participate in administering and implementing policy, especially as it pertains to academic affairs. The institution shall adopt and publish a policy on the responsibility and authority of faculty in matters of academic governance. At a minimum, the policy should address the role of faculty in:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) the development of the educational program of the institution; (b) the selection of course materials, instructional equipment and other educational resources; (c) systematic evaluation and revision of the curriculum; (d) assessment of student learning outcomes; and (e) planning for institutional effectiveness. 	1/1/2015
3-1-503. Specialized/ Programmatically Accredited Programs.	<p><u>Where accreditation of a program by a specialized or programmatic accreditor is required for students to obtain entry-level employment in the state where the institution is licensed or otherwise approved, the institution must obtain such accreditation in a timely manner. The institution must provide and document notification to students as to:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) which programs hold specialized or programmatic accreditation; (b) whether successful completion of a program qualifies a student to receive, apply to take, or take licensure exams in the state where the institution is located. For on-line programs, this information must be provided for all states from which the institution enrolls students; and (c) any other requirements that are generally required for employment. <p><u>The institution shall assess the curriculum and/or the need for specialized accreditation and update it as needed to reflect current requirements for employment.</u></p>	1/1/2015
3-1-504. Education or Study Abroad Activities	<p><u>An institution may enter into formal education or study abroad relationships with eligible institutions outside its home country in accordance with the requirements outlined in Appendix J.</u></p>	1/1/2015
3-1-505. Direct Assessment Competency-based Programs.	<p><u>Competency-based programs utilize direct assessment of student learning by faculty and other experts in the field serving under the supervision of the institution for academic progression in lieu of clock or credit hours. The institution must demonstrate that it has utilized a robust and structured process for identifying the required knowledge, skills and professional behavior ("soft skills") to be considered "competent" in the field. The syllabus for each course must clearly define the competency standards and how the direct assessment of student learning will be conducted</u></p>	1/1/2015

Section	Criteria Revision	Date Modified
APPENDIX J: <u>Principles and Guidelines for Program Enhancement Education or Study Abroad Activities</u>	<p><u>International demands for post-secondary education provide opportunities for member institutions to expand the geographic footprint of their education delivery infrastructure, through on-line, on-ground and combinations of those and other modalities. Regardless of the education delivery infrastructure utilized at an international location, the institution is expected to operate in compliance with ACICS standards as demonstrated through direct monitoring of administrative operations, instruction, student services and the comparable full array of processes that apply to all institutions accredited by ACICS.</u></p> <p><u>The standards and guidelines below will be applied to institutions that offer education or study abroad activities at international locations under the ACICS grant of accreditation. They are designed to apply Council expectations for effectiveness and integrity to programs that primarily lead to employment in professional, technical and occupational fields, regardless of the geographic location of the education or study abroad activity, or the modality with which the education is delivered. Council acknowledges education or study abroad may serve to enhance the interpersonal and developmental aspects of the student, including an improved ability to relate to and work with people from different cultures and ethnic, linguistic and national backgrounds. Council also acknowledges that education or study abroad, as part of a comprehensive career education program, may be directly applicable to the workplace and contribute to a graduate's success in finding placement in an organization with a multinational employee profile that utilizes multinational vendors and suppliers. Finally, the Council authorizes the utilization of education or study abroad, under the parameters prescribed in this section, in recognition that structured education or study abroad may enhance the graduate's ability to compete for job placement with international employers.</u></p> <p><u>A key principle of ACICS standards regarding education or study abroad is that the accredited institution must demonstrate that the quality of the education derived from locations outside of a student's home country is comparable to that received at its domestic accredited locations. The burden of proof lies with the institution, regardless of the form of education or study abroad.</u></p> <p><u>1. Education or Study Abroad Activities: For all education or study abroad activities, other than those performed through a formal partnership agreement with an international institution, a U.S.-based institution is required to host a comprehensive Forum review and provide the final determination letter demonstrating substantial conformity with the Forum's standards, contained in the document, "Standards for Good Practice of Education Abroad (SGPEA)", published by the Forum on Education Abroad (http://www.forumea.org/standards-standards.cfm); the requirements for maximum length of study as defined in #2 (below); and the academic residency requirement as described in #3 (below). For those education or study abroad activities performed through a formal partnership agreement, the IPA requirements apply. (Section 2-2-510; Appendix I) International institutions accredited by ACICS located outside the U.S. that are planning to initiate education or study abroad activities must disclose the nature and scope of such activities in writing to ACICS and seek prior approval.</u></p>	1/1/2015
APPENDIX J: <u>Principles and Guidelines for Program Enhancement Education or Study Abroad Activities</u> Continued	<p><u>2. Maximum of Length of Education or Study Abroad Activity: No more than 50 percent of a program's coursework may be completed through education or study abroad activities, including transfer credit, challenge examinations and other sources. An education or study abroad program may not exceed an equivalent of two semesters in length.</u></p> <p><u>3. Academic Residency: Students admitted to an education or study abroad program are those who must have satisfactorily completed a minimum of one full-time equivalent semester or quarter or trimester, on-line or on-site through the home institution. Additionally, education or study abroad students are required to complete a minimum one full-time equivalent semester or quarter or trimester on-line or on-site through the home institution following completion of the education or study abroad activity and prior to completion of the credential.</u></p>	1/1/2015

Section	Criteria Revision	Date Modified
GLOSSARY Campus Addition- Learning Site	A location of a main campus or branch campus which is under the direct control of the on-site administration of that campus but at a site that is apart from the primary location of that campus. (See Sections 1-3-103 and 2-2-104(b)) <u>A location learning site is a classroom extension of a main campus or additional location branch campus that is within reasonable and commutable distance from the managing location, and is apart from the managing location and is capable of providing sufficient academic and administrative oversight, providing access to all student services and instructional resources and maintaining academic quality. Learning sites used for delivery of distance education activity or collaborative arrangements with other entities for specific on-site educational activity must be approved by the Council on a case by case basis and are subject to a quality assurance visit as specified by the Council.</u>	1/1/2015
1-3-103. Campus Addition Learning Site.	A learning site is a location where educational activities are conducted apart from a main or branch campus that does not, on its own, qualify as a branch: <u>A location learning site is a classroom extension of a main campus or additional location branch campus that is within reasonable and commutable distance from the managing location, and is apart from the managing location and is capable of providing sufficient academic and administrative oversight, providing access to all student services and instructional resources and maintaining academic quality. Learning sites used for delivery of distance education activity or collaborative arrangements with other entities for specific on-site educational activity must be approved by the Council on a case by case basis and are subject to a quality assurance visit as specified by the Council.</u>	1/1/2015
Glossary: Competency-based Program: See also Direct Assessment Competency-based Programs	<u>A competency-based program clearly defines the skills, knowledge and professional behavior ("soft skills") that are required for a student or a graduate to perform at a level considered to be "competent" by practitioners and employers in the field. It focuses on direct, not indirect, assessment methods to measure student learning in lieu of in-class seat time, credit hours or clock hours. It utilizes robust curriculum development process and comprehensively specifies how qualified faculty and/or other eligible experts in the field would directly assess the achievement of required competencies and student learning.</u>	1/1/2015
Glossary: Direct Assessment Competency-based Program.	<u>A program that clearly defines the skills, knowledge and professional behavior ("soft skills") that are required of a student or a graduate to perform at a level considered to be "competent" by practitioners and employers in the field. Only "direct" assessment of student learning and competencies are acceptable. Direct assessment measures must apply to the entire program as well as to each course required for the program. Examples of "direct assessment" measures are as follows: acceptable scores on industry-recognized licensure or certification examinations; standardized tests; pre- and post-tests; examinations and quizzes; research projects; case study analysis; criterion-based rating scale or rubric scores; course-embedded questions; observation of clinical experience, internships, or field work; and capstone projects, theses, exhibits or performances. (For a federal definition and for Council standards, see Appendix H, Section 1).</u> <u>("Indirect assessment" of student learning, while deemed valuable for institutional program evaluation and enhancement, are not included in the consideration for approval of a competency-based program. Examples of indirect measures are: course evaluations; hours spent in classes or on out-of-class educational activities; graduate or employer satisfaction surveys; graduate placement rates; student retention rates; and student perception surveys.)</u>	1/1/2015
2-2-101. List of Substantive Changes.	The following institutional changes will be considered substantive and require Council approval before they can be included in the institution's scope of accreditation: ... <u>(l) The proposed addition of a direct assessment competency-based program as described in Standards 2-2-111, 3-1-505, and Appendix H, Section 1.</u>	1/1/2015
2-2-111. Addition of a Direct Assessment Competency-based Program.	<u>2-2-111. Addition of a Direct Assessment Competency-based Program.</u> It is the responsibility of the institution to submit the required application for Council review and approval. The initial Council approval allows the institution to apply for submission of an application for approval of that competency-based program to the United States Department of Education for Title IV Federal student financial aid. See also Standard 3-1-505 and Appendix H, Section 1.	1/1/2015

Section	Criteria Revision	Date Modified
Title III, Chapter 1 General Standards	<p>3-1-500 – EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES</p> <p>...</p> <p><u>3-1-505. Direct Assessment Competency-based Programs. Competency-based programs utilize direct assessment of student learning by faculty and other experts in the field serving under the supervision of the institution for academic progression in lieu of clock or credit hours. The institution must demonstrate that it has utilized a robust and structured process for identifying the required knowledge, skills and professional behavior (“soft skills”) to be considered “competent” in the field.</u></p> <p><u>The syllabus for each course must clearly define the competency standards and how the direct assessment of student learning will be conducted.</u></p> <p><u>The institution must demonstrate to the Council its methodology for determining the equivalent number of credits hours or clock hours required for the program.</u></p> <p><u>The institution is required to maintain, as part of the permanent academic record, student work submitted for direct assessment along with the institution’s assessment of student achievement.</u></p> <p><u>Specific standards and requirements are described in Appendix H Principles and Requirements for Nontraditional Education, Section 1.</u></p>	1/1/2015
APPENDIX C- Institutional Publications Requirements	<p>....</p> <p><u>At a minimum, the catalog must contain the following items:</u></p> <p>....</p> <p><u>23. If the institution is approved by the Council to offer direct assessment competency-based program(s), the catalog must include the following information:</u></p> <p><u>(a) a clear identification and listing of direct assessment competency-based program(s);</u></p> <p><u>(b) a concise and clear description of how such programs are structured and administered; any special admissions requirements; how students will be expected to demonstrate achievement of competency goals; the types of academic and student services offered to assist students to pass the assessments; and how student achievements will be shown on the academic transcript;</u></p> <p><u>(c) disclosure of the number of equivalent credit hours or clock hours and the general methodology the institution uses to determine the equivalencies;</u></p> <p><u>(d) a clear description of how financial aid will be administered and disbursed for eligible students enrolled in such programs;</u></p> <p><u>(e) disclosure of other entities or qualified individuals, in addition to the institution’s faculty, engaged in the direct assessment process; and</u></p> <p><u>(f) disclosure of the consequences or options available to students if they fail to demonstrate achievement of competency goals within a prescribed period of time.</u></p>	1/1/2015

Section	Criteria Revision	Date Modified
Appendix D - Standards of Satisfactory Progress <u>17. If the institution is approved to offer direct assessment competency-based program(s), the institution must demonstrate that it has implemented appropriate policies that describe how it will measure whether a student enrolled in a competency-based program is making satisfactory academic progress. Policies and procedures must be implemented to identify in a timely manner when a student enrolled in such a program has withdrawn or changed enrollment status. The institution must maintain for Council review evidence that financial aid officers and others assigned to monitor satisfactory academic progress have been trained and are adequately monitored for implementing policies affecting competency-based programs.</u>	1/1/2015
APPENDIX H Principles and Requirements for Nontraditional Education	<u>SECTION I</u> <u>DIRECT ASSESSMENT COMPETENCY-BASED PROGRAMS</u> <u>Programs that are designed to prepare students for a specific profession or career are especially suited to be offered as direct assessment competency-based programs because such programs focus on what the students need to know, understand, or be able to do. The process utilized for the development of the curriculum, expected competencies, ways to directly assess such competencies and equate them to credit hours or clock hours (as required by the United States Department of Education as well as by the Council) demands active involvement of employers, as appropriate, and other experts in the discipline. Potential benefits gained by such programs are as follows:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <u>• Allow students to progress at their own pace, but in compliance with the institution's satisfactory academic progress policy;</u> <u>• Allow flexibility to motivated students;</u> <u>• May potentially shorten the time for completion of the program;</u> <u>• May potentially reduce overall cost of education; and</u> <u>• May foster creativity for the institution, faculty and students in exploring cost-effective pathways to complete a program.</u> <u>Federal Definition of Direct Assessment Competency-based Programs</u> <u>A direct assessment program is an instructional program that, in lieu of credit hours or clock hours as a measure of student learning, utilizes direct assessment of student learning, or recognizes the direct assessment of student learning by others. The assessment must be consistent with the accreditation of the institution or program utilizing the results of the assessment.</u> <u>Direct assessment of student learning means a measure by the institution of what a student knows and can do in terms of the body of knowledge making up the educational program. These measures provide evidence that a student has command of a specific subject, content area, or skill or that the student demonstrates a specific quality such as creativity, analysis or synthesis associated with the subject matter of the program. Examples of direct measures include projects, papers, examinations, presentations, performances, and portfolios.</u> <u>ACICS Glossary of Definitions</u> <u>Using the Federal definition as a guide, the Council has developed expanded definitions for Competency-based Programs and Direct Assessment Competency-based Programs. A longer list of examples of "direct" assessment measures is given in the Glossary. "Indirect" assessment measures, while deemed valuable for assessing institutional and program effectiveness, are not included in the consideration for the approval of competency-based programs.</u> <u>For consideration of eligibility to participate in Title IV Federal Student Aid Programs, the Department of Education will consider only direct assessment competency-based programs.</u>	1/1/2015

Section	Criteria Revision	Date Modified
APPENDIX H Principles and Requirements for Nontraditional Education	<p>Process for Review, Approval and Quality Monitoring Visits</p> <p><u>Proposed initiation of a direct assessment competency-based program is classified as a substantive change and requires Council review and approval.</u></p> <p><u>Institutions must submit Part I of the Application for Direct Assessment Competency-based Program, along with required supporting documents, for a preliminary review and Council action. A separate application is required for each program. The guidance document and instructions accompanying Part I of the application are designed to guide the institutions in gaining an idea of the types of direct assessment methods that are strongly recommended for professional and career-focused programs. The principles and requirements included in this Appendix will be applied in reviewing the application.</u></p> <p><u>In considering the application, the Council will determine if the institution has demonstrated that it has used a rigorous process to identify what the student or graduate must know and be able to do to be considered "competent" by employers and experts in the field or discipline. In addition, the institution has demonstrated that it has developed robust direct assessment techniques and has explicitly described how it determines the equivalent number of credit or clock hours for the program.</u></p> <p><u>Upon approval of Part I of the application by the Council, the institution will apply to the U. S. Department of Education for Title IV approval of the proposed direct assessment competency-based program.</u></p> <p><u>Part II of the Application for Direct Assessment Competency-based Programs must be submitted to ACICS at least three months prior to the effective start date of the program. The approval letter will provide instructions on at least two quality monitoring on-site visits to the institution—the first visit will be conducted within six months of start of the program and a second follow-up visit will be conducted between 12 to 18 months of start of the program, depending upon the credential level of the program.</u></p>	1/1/2015
SECTION 1 DIRECT ASSESSMENT COMPETENCY-BASED PROGRAMS	<p>Institutional Mission and Institutional Readiness</p> <p><u>(a) The basis for the introduction of direct assessment competency-based programs must support the mission and objectives of the institution.</u></p> <p><u>(b) The structure and objectives of the program must clearly demonstrate that a systematic process was utilized in identifying and defining specific competencies related to the program. The process shall include participation of representation from employers, experts in the field, faculty, alumni and faculty.</u></p> <p><u>(c) The Campus Effectiveness Report must include a discussion of the proposed direct assessment competency-based programs—the rationale, overall structure, anticipated direct assessment methods engaged, plans for assessment and continuous improvement of the program, and adoption of best practices in competency-based education.</u></p> <p>Admissions Requirements and Enrollment</p> <p><u>Eligibility requirements for admission to direct assessment competency-based programs must be clearly defined, published and consistently applied. The institution is expected to develop objective mechanisms and standards for determining the potential characteristics of students who are best suited to pursue and complete the program.</u></p> <p>Curriculum Development and Direct Assessment Measures</p> <p><u>(a) In the development of the curriculum, institutions must organize each course to enable students to clearly understand measurable learning objectives. Whenever possible, the Council encourages institutions to utilize standardized tests and industry-recognized licensure or certification examinations as direct assessment of student learning. Multiple direct assessment methods, which are student-centered, must be utilized where appropriate.</u></p>	