

SDUIS

Institutional Registration Submission

Location	00273417
Title	
Corporate Type	Privately Held Corporation
Date of Original Establishment of Institution	4/1/1999
Has the institution changed ownership since its original establishment?	Yes
If yes, Date when new ownership was established	9/15/2008
Date of Licensure/Registration/Charter by appropriate agency	4/1/1999
Name of Licensing Agency	California Bureau for Private Postsecondary Education
Is the institution currently accredited?	No
Accrediting Agency	
Date of Grant Expiration	
Does the institution participate in federal financial aid programs (Title IV)?	No
Financial Aid Programs	
Is the institution under any negative state, federal, or accreditation investigation or action?	No
If yes, Reason for Investigation	
Distance Education Offered	100%
Are you offering distance education through a consortium agreement?	No
CEO Name	Cristina Versari
CEO Email	cversari@sduis.edu
Created at 12/9/2015 6:06 PM by <input type="checkbox"/> studentservices@sduis.edu	
Last modified at 2/15/2016 3:36 PM by <input type="checkbox"/> studentservices@sduis.edu	

CampusID	00273417
Location Name	San Diego University For Integrative Studies
Contact Name	Lisa Bulgatz
Type of Location	Main
Address Line 1	3900 Harney Street
Address Line 2	
Address Line 3	
City	San Diego
State/Province	CA
ZIP/Postal Code	92110
Country	United States
Primary Phone	619-297-1999
Fax Number	
Web Page	
Primary Contact First Name	Lisa
Primary Contact Last Name	Bulgatz
Primary Contact E-Mail	studentservices@sduis.edu
CorporateType	Limited Liability Company
Date of Original Establishment of Institution	
Has the institution changed ownership since its original establishment?	No
If yes, Date when new ownership was established	
Date of Licensure/Registration/Charter by appropriate agency	
Name of Licensing Agency	
Is the institution currently accredited?	No
Accrediting Agency	
Date of Grant Expiration	
Does the institution participate in federal financial aid programs (Title IV)?	No
Financial Aid Programs	
Is the institution under any negative state, federal, or accreditation investigation or action?	No
If yes, Reason for Investigation	
OrderStatus	Unpaid
Main Location ID	
Title	
Application	
Effective Move Date	
IAPStatus	IAP PHASE IC
HasAdditionalLocations	No

Created at 11/24/2015 8:05 AM by System Account
 Last modified at 2/26/2019 4:49 PM by Kay Ropko

CampusID	00273417
Location Name	San Diego University For Integrative Studies
Contact Name	Lisa Bulgatz
Type of Location	Main
Address Line 1	3900 Harney Street
Address Line 2	
Address Line 3	
City	San Diego
State/Province	CA
ZIP/Postal Code	92110
Country	United States
Primary Phone	619-297-1999
Fax Number	
Web Page	
Primary Contact First Name	Lisa
Primary Contact Last Name	Bulgatz
Primary Contact E-Mail	studentservices@sd uis.edu
CorporateType	Limited Liability Company
Date of Original Establishment of Institution	
Has the institution changed ownership since its original establishment?	No
If yes, Date when new ownership was established	
Date of Licensure/Registration/Charter by appropriate agency	
Name of Licensing Agency	

Is the institution currently accredited?	No
Accrediting Agency	
Date of Grant Expiration	
Does the institution participate in federal financial aid programs (Title IV)?	No
Financial Aid Programs	
Is the institution under any negative state, federal, or accreditation investigation or action?	No
If yes, Reason for Investigation	
OrderStatus	Unpaid
Main Location ID	
Title	
Application	
Effective Move Date	
IAPStatus	IAP PHASE IC
HasAdditionalLocations	No

Created at 11/24/2015 8:05 AM by [System Account](#)
Last modified at 2/26/2019 4:49 PM by [Kay Ropko](#)

Perlter Walters-Gilliam

From: Perlter Walters-Gilliam on behalf of Initial Applicants
Sent: Tuesday, February 4, 2020 11:14 AM
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: Initial Applicants; Michelle Edwards
Subject: Completion of MESA Checklist

Importance: High

Hello

We are in receipt of the MESA Checklist for *The University of Kemetic Theology* – thank you for your interest in ACICS Accreditation. Based on the information provided in the Checklist, the institution is offering its programs predominantly online and has the appropriate licensure, independence, and history. However, I was unable to find any public information online. Please forward a website or other resource with institutional information, programs, and location for our review.

Thank you.

(b)(6)

Vice President of Accreditation

[Accrediting Council for Independent Colleges and Schools](#)

1350 Eye Street, NW | Suite 560 | Washington, DC 20005

www.acics.org | 202.336-6769 - P |

CONFIDENTIALITY NOTICE:

This communication is only intended for the persons or entities to which it is addressed or copied and may contain information that is confidential and/or privileged in some way. Distribution or copying of this communication or the information contained herein is not expressly authorized. ACICS reserves the right to disclose this communication as required by law without the consent of the persons or entities to which this communication is addressed.

Perliter Walters-Gilliam

From: Perliter Walters-Gilliam on behalf of Initial Applicants
Sent: Monday, December 2, 2019 2:46 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: Initial Applicants
Subject: MESA Checklist Completion - Midwest University

Hello

We are in receipt of the MESA Checklist for Midwest University. Based on the submission and information available via its website, the institution is offering doctoral programs. Unfortunately, ACICS is not able to consider for initial accreditation any institution with doctoral programs.

We wish you and the institution the best as you explore other options. If you would like the opportunity to discuss further, let me know. Thank you.

(b)(6)

Vice President of Accreditation
Accrediting Council for Independent Colleges and Schools
1350 Eye Street, NW | Suite 560 | Washington, DC 20005
www.acics.org | 202.336-6769 - P |

CONFIDENTIALITY NOTICE:

This communication is only intended for the persons or entities to which it is addressed or copied and may contain information that is confidential and/or privileged in some way. Distribution or copying of this communication or the information contained herein is not expressly authorized. ACICS reserves the right to disclose this communication as required by law without the consent of the persons or entities to which this communication is addressed.

Perliter Walters-Gilliam

From: Perliter Walters-Gilliam on behalf of Initial Applicants
Sent: Monday, December 2, 2019 2:42 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: Initial Applicants
Subject: MESA Checklist Completion - Chicago University

Importance: High

Hello

We are in receipt of the MESA checklist for Chicago University which indicated that follow up is needed. I was unable to find information about the institution online so please forward a website where I can review the institution's programs and services. I would also appreciate some background information on the institution and its interest in ACICS. I look forward to hearing from you.

Thank you.

(b)(6)

Vice President of Accreditation
Accrediting Council for Independent Colleges and Schools
1350 Eye Street, NW | Suite 560 | Washington, DC 20005
www.acics.org | 202.336-6769 - P |

CONFIDENTIALITY NOTICE:

This communication is only intended for the persons or entities to which it is addressed or copied and may contain information that is confidential and/or privileged in some way. Distribution or copying of this communication or the information contained herein is not expressly authorized. ACICS reserves the right to disclose this communication as required by law without the consent of the persons or entities to which this communication is addressed.

Perlter Walters-Gilliam

From: Initial Applicants
Subject: FW: Thanks!

From: Perlter Walters-Gilliam <PWGilliam@acics.org>
Sent: Friday, July 26, 2019 1:59 PM
To: [REDACTED] Initial Applicants <InitialApplicants@acics.org>
Cc: Michelle Edwards <medwards@acics.org>
Subject: RE: Thanks!

Hello [REDACTED]
Your summary is accurate. It was my pleasure to share what I know about this process. I wish you and the institution all the best as you focus on serving students and your community.

Sincerely,

(b)(6)

Vice President of Accreditation
Accrediting Council for Independent Colleges and Schools
1350 Eye Street, NW | Suite 560 | Washington, DC 20005
www.acics.org | 202.336-6769 - P |

CONFIDENTIALITY NOTICE:

This communication is only intended for the persons or entities to which it is addressed or copied and may contain information that is confidential and/or privileged in some way. Distribution or copying of this communication or the information contained herein is not expressly authorized. ACICS reserves the right to disclose this communication as required by law without the consent of the persons or entities to which this communication is addressed.

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, July 26, 2019 1:46 PM
To: Initial Applicants <InitialApplicants@acics.org>; Perlter Walters-Gilliam <PWGilliam@acics.org>
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: Thanks!

Hi Perlter,

I just wanted to express my appreciation for your gracious help in clarifying the criteria for eligibility from ACICS.

First, I understand that our A.D.N. program could not be eligible for review given our recent launch in January, 2019; no outcomes would be available for review.

Second, I understand that while we have been providing postsecondary credentials such as our Basic Nursing Assistant program for many years beyond the two-year minimum institutional requirement, it does not meet the minimum of 300 clock hours in length.

If I have not summarized what you mentioned concerning the ACICS eligibility, or if you have anything to add so that I may accurately convey the highlights of our discussion, please let me know.

I value your suggestions about contacting other accrediting bodies, especially the Accrediting Bureau of Health, Education Schools (ABHES) and the Accrediting Commission of Career Schools and Colleges. I will certainly let you know what I find out.

Thank you for your kindness in helping me navigate this challenging waters!

Best,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Dean of Academic Affairs
Instituto del Progreso Latino
2520 S. Western
Chicago, IL 60608
P: 773-890-0055 ext 4523

[REDACTED]

www.institutochicago.org



 **SAVE PAPER - PLEASE CONSIDER
BEFORE YOU PRINT**

ACCREDITATION CRITERIA

Policies, Procedures, and Standards

Publication Date: January 17, 2020

ACCREDITING COUNCIL FOR INDEPENDENT COLLEGES AND SCHOOLS

1350 Eye Street, NW • Suite 560 • Washington, DC 20005

202.336.6780 – telephone • www.acics.org

Accreditation Criteria Policies, Procedures, and Standards

Accrediting Council for Independent Colleges and Schools

1350 Eye Street, NW
Suite 560
Washington, DC 20005
(202) 336-6780 (telephone)
acics@acics.org
www.acics.org

Publication Date: January 17, 2020

Introduction 10

Title I General Policies 12

 Chapter 1 An Overview of the Council 12

 Statement of Mission 12

 Definition of Accreditation 12

 Definition of Academic Quality 12

 1-1-100 – Bylaws 12

 1-1-200 – Recognition 12

 1-1-300 – Public Participation 13

Title I General Policies 14

 Chapter 2 Eligibility Criteria 14

 Introduction 14

 1-2-100 – Minimum Eligibility Requirements 14

Title I General Policies 16

 Chapter 3 Classification of Campuses and Institutions 16

 Introduction 16

 1-3-100 – Classification of Campuses 16

 1-3-200 – Classification of Institutions 16

Title II General Procedures 17

 Chapter 1 Gaining and Maintaining Accreditation 17

 Introduction 17

 2-1-100 – Accreditation Workshop Requirements 17

 2-1-200 – Initial Accreditation 17

 2-1-300 – Renewal of Accreditation 18

 2-1-400 – Visiting Teams, Selection and Composition 19

 2-1-500 – Team Functions and Procedures 20

 2-1-600 – Post-Visit Procedures 20

 2-1-700 – Council Actions 20

 2-1-800 – Maintaining Accreditation 21

Title II General Procedures 23

 Chapter 2 Institutional Changes 23

 Introduction 23

 2-2-100 – Substantive Changes 23

 2-2-200 – Redesignation of Campuses 27

 2-2-300 – Closing of a Campus 28

 2-2-400 – Ownership or Control 29

 2-2-500 – Programs of Study Regulations 32

 2-2-600 – Other Changes 34

 2-2-700—Voluntary withdrawal 35

Title II General Procedures 36

 Chapter 3 Council Actions 36

Introduction.....	36
2-3-100 – Accreditation Granted.....	36
2-3-200 – Accreditation Deferred or Conditioned	37
2-3-300 – Accreditation Denied	38
2-3-400 – Accreditation Withdrawn.....	38
2-3-500 – Council Review or Hearing Procedures.....	39
2-3-600 – Review Board Appeal Process.....	40
2-3-700 – Complaints and Adverse Information.....	42
2-3-800 – Special and FACT Visits	43
2-3-900 – Debarment.....	43
Title III Evaluation Standards	45
Chapter 1 General Standards Applicable to All Institutions	45
Introduction.....	45
3-1-100 – Mission: Purpose and Objectives.....	45
3-1-110 – Campus Effectiveness.....	45
3-1-200 – Organization.....	46
3-1-300 – Administration	47
3-1-400 – Relations with Students	48
3-1-410 – Admissions and Recruitment.....	49
3-1-420 – Standards of Satisfactory Progress	50
3-1-430 – Tuition and Fees.....	50
3-1-440 – Student Services.....	52
3-1-500 – Educational Activities.....	52
3-1-510 – Program administration, Planning, Development, and Evaluation.....	53
3-1-520 – Credentials Conferred.....	56
3-1-530 – Instruction	56
3-1-540 – Faculty	56
3-1-600 – Educational Facilities.....	57
3-1-700 – Publications.....	57
3-1-800 – Library Resources and Services.....	58
Title III Evaluation Standards	59
Chapter 2 Standards for Nondegree Programs.....	59
Introduction.....	59
3-2-100 – Faculty	59
3-2-200 – Instructional Resources, Materials.....	60
Title III Evaluation Standards	61
Chapter 3 Standards for Occupational Associate’s Degree Programs	61
Introduction.....	61
3-3-100 – State Authority.....	61
3-3-200 – Educational Activities.....	61
3-3-300 – Faculty	62
3-3-400 – Library, Instructional Resources, and Technology.....	63
Title III Evaluation Standards	64
Chapter 4 Standards for Academic Associate’s Degree Programs	64

Introduction.....	64
3-4-100 – State Authority	64
3-4-200 – Educational Activities.....	64
3-4-300 – Faculty	65
3-4-400 – Library, Instructional Resources, and Technology	65
Title III Evaluation Standards	67
Chapter 5 Standards for Bachelor’s Degree Programs.....	67
Introduction.....	67
3-5-100 – State Authority	67
3-5-200 – Educational Activities.....	67
3-5-300 – Faculty	68
3-5-400 – Library, Instructional Resources, and Technology	69
Title III Evaluation Standards	71
Chapter 6 Standards for Master’s Degree Programs.....	71
Introduction.....	71
3-6-100 – Nature of Graduate Education	71
3-6-200 – State Authority	71
3-6-300 – Organization and Administration.....	71
3-6-400 – Educational Activities.....	71
3-6-500 – Faculty	72
3-6-600 – Admissions.....	72
3-6-700 – Library, Instructional Resources, and Technology	73
3-6-800 – Publications.....	74
Glossary.....	76
Appendix A Bylaws	86
Appendix B Procedures and Guidelines for Unannounced Visits	98
Appendix C Institutional Publications Requirements.....	100
Appendix D Standards of Satisfactory Progress	104
Appendix E Guidelines for Institutionally Funded Student Aid.....	107
Appendix F Requirements for English as a Second Language Programs	108
Appendix G Guidelines on Disclosure and Notification.....	110
Appendix H Principles and Requirements for Nontraditional Education.....	112
Appendix I Principles and Guidelines for International Partnership Agreements	114
Appendix J Principles and Guidelines for Program Enhancement Education and Study Abroad Activities	116

CONTENTS

Appendix K	Requirements and Guidelines for the Campus Effectiveness Plan (CEP).....	117
Appendix L	Student Achievement Standards and Campus Accountability Reports.....	119
Appendix M	Guidelines for Occupational and Avocational Programs and Courses.....	125
INDEX	126

INTRODUCTION

The Accrediting Council for Independent Colleges and Schools (“ACICS” or “Council”) supports the concept that periodic evaluation entered into voluntarily by institutions and their peers enhances the quality of the educational process and demonstrates that self-regulation of a profession is superior to outside regulation. This has been the philosophy of ACICS since 1912 when the first association of business schools was formed.

ACICS is incorporated as a non-profit education organization in the Commonwealth of Virginia and maintains offices in the District of Columbia. It has been recognized by the U.S. Department of Education since 1956 as a national institutional accrediting body. The federal government, for purposes of distributing institutional and student financial funds, lists ACICS as an accrediting body on which it relies in determining the quality of education and training offered at institutions that ACICS accredits.

To help institutions and peer evaluators meet their responsibilities in conducting the process, ACICS developed and periodically has revised a set of policies, procedures, and standards governing the activity. Collectively, they comprise the *Accreditation Criteria* which, when complied with by institutions, results in the awarding of accreditation. This document incorporates all changes agreed to by the institutions since the last published edition, as well as organizational modifications.

Embodied in these criteria is the belief by ACICS that accredited institutions should at all times demonstrate a high standard of professional conduct involving educational practices and business ethics. Accreditation is not a regulatory process in the legal sense. The Council encourages not just conformity to standards but a continuous striving for excellence. Only those institutions that believe in this tenet should seek accreditation.

TITLE I GENERAL POLICIES

Chapter 1 An Overview of the Council

STATEMENT OF MISSION

The mission of the Accrediting Council for Independent Colleges and Schools is to advance educational excellence at independent, nonpublic career schools, colleges, and organizations in the United States and abroad. This is achieved through a deliberate and thorough accrediting process of quality assurance and enhancement as well as ethical business and educational practices.

DEFINITION OF ACCREDITATION

Accreditation is an independent appraisal of an institution during which the institution's overall educational quality (including outcomes), professional status among similar institutions, financial stability, and operational ethics are self-evaluated and judged by peers. It is a voluntary activity separate and distinct from business licensing, authority to award educational credentials, and eligibility to administer student financial assistance.

DEFINITION OF ACADEMIC QUALITY

ACICS defines academic quality as the overall performance of the institution in the context of its mission and as measured by the extent to which the institution achieves its intended student learning and student success outcomes.

The evaluation of student learning outcomes involves the assessment of skill and competency attainment. Student success outcomes include student retention or persistence; employment or placement; and student, graduate and employer satisfaction.

The effectiveness of the institution is demonstrated by its compliance with accreditation standards as well as its continuous striving for enhancement of quality. ACICS assesses academic quality in the following areas: mission and objectives; campus effectiveness planning; student outcomes; financial stability; recruitment and admission practices; organizational structure and administration; student services; academic program and curriculum; quality of faculty and instruction; physical facilities; library and learning resources; and publication and disclosure of student achievement.

1-1-100 – BYLAWS

The Bylaws of the Accrediting Council for Independent Colleges and Schools (“ACICS” or “the Council”) are an integral part of the *Accreditation Criteria* and are incorporated herein by reference. The Bylaws are contained in Appendix A.

1-1-200 – RECOGNITION

ACICS is a national institutional accrediting agency that is a reliable authority regarding the quality of education and training provided by the institutions that it accredits. It has been recognized by the U.S. Department of Education (“the Department”) as a national institutional accrediting agency that is a reliable authority regarding the quality of education and training provided by the institutions that it accredits.

The Department's recognition provisions include certain operational requirements. Any proposed change in the policies, procedures, or accreditation criteria that might alter ACICS's scope of recognition or ACICS's compliance with the requirements for recognition will be submitted to the Department, the membership, and other appropriate agencies.

The Council adopts the following statements regarding ACICS and the manner in which it carries out its accreditation function:

- (a) The Council grants accreditation for an established period of time, as described more fully in these criteria. Prior to the expiration of the grant of accreditation, each institution must seek a renewal of accreditation. The Council maintains complete and accurate records for each accredited institution that cover the current and the prior periods of accreditation.
- (b) The Council conducts ongoing and comprehensive reviews of its accreditation criteria and its policies and procedures to ascertain their appropriateness and effectiveness. Proposed changes to the criteria or the Council's policies and procedures may be initiated by the Council or submitted by member institutions or other interested parties, and substantive proposed changes approved by the Council will be circulated to member institutions, appropriate governmental agencies, and other interested parties for comment. The Council will consider all comments before it adopts any final changes.

1-1-300 – PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Visitors to Council policy meetings will be seated as space permits. They should notify the President or the Chair of the Council in advance if they wish to address specific agenda items. Individuals may request that items be placed on the agenda by writing to the President at least 45 days before each meeting.

TITLE I GENERAL POLICIES

Chapter 2 Eligibility Criteria

INTRODUCTION

The Council fulfills an evaluative and accrediting function for a particular sector of postsecondary education. This function has been deemed appropriate by the U.S. Department of Education through the recognition of ACICS.

The mission of the Accrediting Council for Independent Colleges and Schools is to advance educational excellence at independent, nonpublic career schools, colleges, and organizations in the United States and abroad. This is achieved through a deliberate and thorough accreditation process of quality assurance and enhancement as well as ethical business and educational practices.

1-2-100 – MINIMUM ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

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

- (a) It shall be an institution of postsecondary education (as herein defined) primarily offering certificates or diplomas, associate's, bachelor's, or master's degrees in programs designed to educate students for professional, technical, or occupational careers. The Council may consider, on a case-by-case basis, a noninstitutional entity which is approved by an agency authorized by the state agency or governing body, to evaluate such academic or occupational programs.

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

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

- (b) It shall be legally organized; licensed by (1) the appropriate state education agency for postsecondary institutions or (2) the appropriate state agency for authorizing the conduct of business in that state for noninstitutional entities. For non-U. S. institutions in countries in which legal authority to award degrees is not available or required, evidence of acceptance as a reputable private institution with significant support from all key stakeholders must be provided. For all institutions, educational services must have been offered to the general public for at least two years immediately prior to consideration of the application by ACICS.
- (c) Its mission shall be to offer educational programs which help students develop skills and competencies to enhance their careers.
- (d) Its residential enrollment and enrollment in each program shall be sufficient both to support coursework and learning experiences that, separately or in combination, constitute measurable and defined educational programs, and to enable ACICS to assess the educational effectiveness of those programs.

Institutions that are considered distance education institutions may be considered on a case-by-case basis

provided they require a residential component.

- (e) It shall have a sufficient number of graduates from a majority of its programs to enable ACICS to assess the educational effectiveness of those programs.
- (f) It shall demonstrate financial stability to sustain operations.
- (g) It shall be in compliance with all applicable laws and regulations.
- (h) It shall be organized as a corporation, as a limited partnership with a corporate general partner, or as a limited liability company.
- (i) Its evaluation for accreditation shall be authorized by the chief executive officer.
- (j) Its owners or managers shall not have been debarred by ACICS. (See Section 2-3-900)

These eligibility requirements must be continuously met in order to maintain accreditation.

TITLE I GENERAL POLICIES**Chapter 3 Classification of Campuses and Institutions**

INTRODUCTION

ACICS is an institutional accrediting body that accredits entire institutions. It does not separately accredit individual campuses or programs. All approved locations and programs are included within the institution's grant of accreditation. Therefore, all campuses must meet the standards established by the Council and must be evaluated accordingly. The specific method by which compliance with these standards is evaluated and accreditation is conferred depends upon the classification of campuses and the institutions they comprise.

1-3-100 – CLASSIFICATION OF CAMPUSES

The Council classifies campus activities into two categories: main and branch campus.

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

1-3-102. *Branch Campus.* 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.

Full disclosure must be made in the catalogs of the main campus and/or branch campus as to the credentials and programs offered at each location. A branch campus may publish its own catalog.

1-3-103. *Learning Site.* A learning site is a classroom extension of a main or branch campus that is within a five-mile radius of the managing campus and maintains academic quality by providing sufficient academic and administrative oversight and access to all student services and instructional resources. Learning sites that are greater than five miles from the managing campus and offer student transportation to the managing campus or are 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. All learning sites are subject to an on-site evaluation visit during the managing campus renewal of accreditation evaluation visit.

1-3-200 – CLASSIFICATION OF INSTITUTIONS

1-3-200. *Classification of Institutions.* The Council classifies institutions into two categories: single-campus and multiple-campus.

1-3-201. *Single-Campus Institution.* A single-campus institution is an institution that provides educational programs at one main campus. Accreditation is granted to the institution.

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

TITLE II GENERAL PROCEDURES

Chapter 1 Gaining and Maintaining Accreditation

INTRODUCTION

This chapter outlines the steps that institutions must follow and the procedures utilized by ACICS leading to and following the award of accreditation status. Accreditation is a deliberate and thorough process and is entered into for purposes of quality assessment and institutional enhancement. When an institution applies for and receives a grant of accreditation, it is committing itself to operate in accordance with the standards and policies established by the Council throughout the term of the grant.

Inasmuch as accreditation is given for a specified period of time not to exceed six years, ACICS uses the term “initial grant” to connote the first time an institution is accredited. The term “renewal of accreditation” indicates a continuing status with ACICS after an institution has reapplied, has been reevaluated, and, in effect, has been reaccredited.

2-1-100 – ACCREDITATION WORKSHOP REQUIREMENTS

The Council schedules accreditation workshops each year. Applicants for initial or renewals of accreditation are required to attend a workshop. During these workshops, Council representatives will consult with institutional representatives to help them understand and complete the process. Institutional representatives are required to attend an accreditation workshop within 18 months prior to the final submission of the evaluation visit materials, which are due two weeks prior to an on-site visit. The chief on-site administrator of each campus, as well as any other individual whose responsibility is to coordinate the accreditation process, is required to attend.

2-1-200 – INITIAL ACCREDITATION

All communications concerning initiation of the accrediting process for an institution should be sent to the ACICS office. The accrediting process proceeds in distinct phases, each of which must be satisfactorily completed by the institution before the next can occur. Each phase must be authorized by the chief executive officer of the institution, who also can authorize voluntary withdrawal from the process at any time prior to final action by ACICS.

When considering whether to award an initial grant of accreditation to an institution, ACICS will take into consideration the actions of other recognized accrediting agencies that have denied accreditation to the institution, placed the institution on probationary status, or revoked the accreditation of the institution. If an institution's accreditation was withdrawn or denied previously by ACICS, its initial application will be considered only after at least two years have elapsed.

2-1-201. *Preliminary Review.* The institution must request in writing a preliminary review and receive a determination as to whether it is eligible to apply for accreditation as a single campus institution or a multiple campus institution. Such a preliminary review does not constitute an application.

To be eligible for accreditation, the institution must meet the eligibility criteria outlined in Title I, Chapter 2, and the definitions of campuses and institutional types outlined in Title I, Chapter 3. In addition, it must have graduated at least one class at each credential level it offers. Programs offered at any credential level from which there are not graduates will be reviewed as required in Section 2-2-107.

2-1-202. *Application.* The institution, after receiving a favorable preliminary review, shall submit a formal application for accreditation on forms supplied by ACICS. By submitting an application for an initial grant of accreditation, the institution agrees to be bound by the standards contained herein, including the ACICS Bylaws

contained in Appendix A.

The institution shall certify that the requirements covered in Title I, Chapter 2, “Eligibility Criteria” have been met. The application forms, eligibility certification, supporting documents required in the application form, and the nonrefundable application fee shall be submitted to ACICS.

Once an institution has been determined to be eligible for evaluation, filed a formal application, and remitted the application fee, the application is kept active for a period of one year.

2-1-203. Resource Visit. Following a determination by staff of the completeness of the application materials, a resource visit will be made to the institution, at the institution’s expense, to determine if it is ready to begin the self-evaluation. ACICS, at its discretion, may waive a resource visit if that institution has maintained a satisfactory standing with another recognized accrediting agency. A report of the resource visit will be made available to the school and to ACICS and will be used for advisory purposes only.

Initial applicants must submit audited financial statements certified by an independent certified public accountant for the institution’s most recent fiscal year before a resource visit will be scheduled.

2-1-204. Self-Evaluation. Self-evaluation is the most important part of the accreditation process, requiring full involvement by administration, staff, and faculty. The Council publishes separate guidelines and materials to help institutions with the process.

2-1-205. Scheduling the Evaluation Visit. Council staff will schedule dates for the visit or visits to evaluate compliance of an institution at all of its locations. It is the responsibility of the institution to agree to dates for the visit(s) when classes are in session, faculty is teaching, administrative staff is available, and other operations are functioning normally.

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 three months prior to the start of the assigned review cycle. This also involves submission of the institution’s renewal self-study, with supporting documents. Institutions that have not submitted a renewal self-study at least two months prior to the start of the assigned review cycle, and have not requested and received an appropriate extension or notified the Council of intent to voluntarily withdraw its accreditation, will be subject to late fees and may be issued a show-cause directive. The accreditation previously granted to an institution expires automatically with the passage of time unless extended by an action taken by ACICS. An extension of the previous grant cannot exceed one year, and not more than one extension may be given except for extraordinary circumstances over which the institution has no control.

2-1-301. Application. The process of application for a renewal of accreditation is the same as for initial accreditation except that institutions are not required to undergo another resource visit. No substantive changes shall be made to the institution once the application has been submitted, leading up to the campus site visit. Multiple campus institutions that are applying for renewals of accreditation will be required to submit a separate self-study for each branch campus.

The Council will not consider an application for a renewal of accreditation unless all reports are current and all fees are paid. (See Sections 2-1-801 and 2-1-802.)

2-1-302. Withholding of Accreditation. A decision by ACICS, based upon the application and evaluation for a renewal of accreditation, not to award accreditation for a new period is considered to be the withholding of accreditation, not the withdrawal of the previous grant of accreditation. The previous grant expires automatically with the passage of time unless the Council affirmatively extends the previous grant while it is considering the renewal of accreditation application. The Council always will give written reasons for withholding accreditation,

and the matter from that point will be governed by procedures later described in Title II, Chapter 3, Council Actions.

ACICS will not award a renewal of accreditation to an institution that is subject to an interim action by another recognized institutional accrediting agency or a state agency that could lead to the suspension, revocation, or termination of that institution's accreditation or authority to provide postsecondary education. Further, a renewal of accreditation will not be awarded to an institution that has been notified by its state licensing agency of a threatened suspension, revocation, or termination by the state of the institution's legal authority to provide postsecondary education, and the due process rights required by the action have not been exhausted.

2-1-400 – VISITING TEAMS, SELECTION AND COMPOSITION

When an institution has submitted a satisfactory self-study and other required documentation, the office of the President will appoint a team to visit and evaluate the institution. The institution is notified of the composition of the visiting team and may request that team members be replaced for cause.

2-1-401. *Selection of Team Members.* Evaluators are selected from among educators, executives, and practitioners in business, administrative, and technical fields, and from state departments of education and other evaluation and approval bodies. The person designated as chair of the team is experienced in management and is responsible for assuring that the visit is conducted fairly and thoroughly.

Appropriate state licensing and approval bodies are routinely notified of forthcoming visits and invited to participate in the visits as observers. They do not participate in team deliberations or in preparing the team report.

2-1-402. *Composition of Teams.* The size and qualifications of the team are determined at the discretion of the Council based on the type and size of the institution, the type and number of programs being offered, the mode of educational delivery, location of the campus, student enrollment, credentials offered, and other special circumstances. Full-team on-site evaluation visits will consist of individuals serving as academic, administrative, public, or member representatives as defined in Appendix A, Bylaws.

The application forms and the completed self-study will be supplied to members of the visiting team for review prior to the visit and for use during the visit.

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

2-1-404. *Staff Member on Visit.* A member of the ACICS staff accompanies teams on visits. In the event that an ACICS staff member is unable to accompany a team on a visit, the use of a qualified and trained contractor may be used as the ACICS staff representative on the visit. The ACICS staff representative is responsible for assuring that comparability is achieved from visit to visit and from institution to institution. The same ACICS staff representative who accompanies a team also is available when ACICS deliberates and may be asked questions about what was observed and reported by the team during the visit.

2-1-405. *Fees.* A fee will be assessed for this visit. Failure to remit payment for the visit fee may result in an adverse action.

2-1-500 – TEAM FUNCTIONS AND PROCEDURES

An institution is expected to be performing according to what it reported in its self-study and to be in compliance with the *Accreditation Criteria* at the time of the visit.

2-1-501. *Scope of Visit.* The scope of a visit will depend on the location, operation, size, program offerings, and classification of the institution. For a multiple campus institution, the main campus and all branch campuses are subject to evaluation, either in conjunction with the main campus or separately.

2-1-502. *Functions.* The functions of the evaluation team are to verify information in the institution's self-study and to report all facts observed during the visit as to how the institution is accomplishing its stated mission, or failing to do so, in compliance with the criteria.

2-1-503. *Procedures.* Institutions are provided in advance with a checklist of materials and documents that should be current and readily available for review by the team. Prior to the visit, institutions are required to update the self-study where significant changes have occurred since its submission to ACICS.

During the visit, institutions are expected to make provisions for adequate consultation between team members and the faculty, administrative staff, students, and chief on-site administrative officer.

The team prepares a written report that covers each area reviewed at the institution and includes other information pertinent to an accurate evaluation. The report subsequently is sent by the team chair to ACICS.

An exit conference is conducted at the conclusion of the visit and is attended by the chief executive or administrative officer of the institution and any others designated by the chief executive officer. During the session, the chair of the team will summarize the evaluation team's findings. Members of the team also may append to the report recommendations for institutional improvement. The visiting team is not a decision-making body.

2-1-600 – POST-VISIT PROCEDURES

After the evaluation visit, the following post-visit procedures and reviews occur.

2-1-601. *Opportunity to Respond.* The ACICS office sends a copy of each evaluation team report to the designated representative at the main campus or to the chief on-site administrator of the respective multiple- or single-campus institution. These individuals are invited to respond in writing within the specified time frame.

2-1-602. *Intermediate Review.* All materials pertinent to an institution's accreditation are reviewed by experienced persons before being reviewed by the Council. These materials include, but are not limited to, the institution's self-evaluation report(s), the visiting team report(s), the institution's response(s) to the team report, financial records of the institution (which are not examined by the evaluation team), and any official reports from state or federal regulatory bodies.

The Intermediate Review Committee (IRC), upon intensive review of institutional files, makes recommendations to the Council of possible accreditation action.

2-1-603. *Council Review.* All materials collected during the evaluation process are reviewed by the Council. Only the Council can take a final accreditation action.

2-1-700 – COUNCIL ACTIONS

Action by ACICS to accredit or renew accreditation or not to do so, or to limit or otherwise condition the grant of accreditation, is determined only following review of the self-evaluation report prepared by the applicant institution, the report of the visiting team, the response of the institution to that report, the institution's financial

condition, and the recommendations (if any) of the interim reviewers. At each level of review, the number and seriousness of any deficiencies are taken into account, as well as the institution's indicated willingness and capability to overcome them. The Council may, at its discretion, direct an institution to submit a teach-out agreement, as described in Section 2-2-303. Specific Council actions are discussed in Title II, Chapter 3.

2-1-701. *Maximum Length of Grants of Accreditation.* The Council determines the grant lengths of each institution that is accredited by ACICS. The maximum length of an initial grant of accreditation is three years. If an institution can demonstrate a record of having been in good standing with another institutional accrediting agency recognized by the United States Department of Education, the Council may award an initial grant of up to four years. The maximum length of a renewal grant of accreditation is six years.

2-1-800 – MAINTAINING ACCREDITATION

An institution, by successfully completing the process, inherently agrees to keep ACICS fully informed of activities at the institution. The Council requires an annual report from each main and branch campus, where appropriate. Institutional changes that must be reported to ACICS are described in Title II, Chapter 2.

2-1-801. *Annual Accountability Reports.* The Annual Accountability Reports must be submitted on Council forms, comply with Council guidelines, and be certified by the chief executive officer of the institution. Data must be submitted separately on the Campus Accountability Report (CAR) for each main campus and for each branch campus. These reports are due on or before November 1 annually. Failure to submit the Annual Accountability Reports in a timely manner will result in the revocation of accreditation.

2-1-802. *Annual Financial Report.* The Annual Financial Report must be submitted on Council forms and be certified by an officer or stockholder of the corporation. Data reported must align with an institution's fiscal year and must be submitted separately for each campus included in the institution's grant of accreditation. It is due no more than 180 days after the end of the institution's fiscal year. Failure to submit the Annual Financial Report in a timely manner will result in the revocation of accreditation.

2-1-803. *Compliance Audits and Audited Financial Statements.* Title IV compliance audits and audited financial statements, certified by an independent certified public accountant, are essential instruments in the determination by ACICS of an institution's compliance with Title IV requirements and financial stability. All institutions are required to submit audited financial statements within 180 days of the end of their fiscal year. All institutions are required to submit audited financial statements within 180 days of the end of their fiscal year, and the statements must represent the institution's fiscal year. All institutions that participate in the Title IV program are required to submit the compliance audit within 180 days of the end of their fiscal year. This audit must also represent the institution's fiscal year, as required by U.S. Department of Education regulations.

2-1-804. *Payment of Fees.* Institutions are required to pay all annual sustaining fees, user fees, evaluation visit deposits and expenses, and other assessed costs by the established deadlines. Non-payment of any fees or expenses subjects a member to revocation of accreditation without a hearing. (See Appendix A, Bylaws, Article VI, Section 5.)

2-1-805. *Unannounced Visits.* The Council, at its discretion, may direct an unannounced visit to occur at an institution, at any time. Procedures for unannounced visits are described in Appendix B.

2-1-806. *Denoting Accreditation.* Only after accreditation is granted by ACICS may an institution so denote its status in official publications or in advertising. The form of notice is prescribed by ACICS, and specific permissible language is set forth in Institutional Publications Requirements in Appendix C.

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 issue a compliance warning, issue a show-cause directive, or otherwise take negative action and require the institution to demonstrate compliance within the time frames described in Title II, Chapter 3. 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 compliance 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.

2-1-809. *Student Achievement Review.* The Council reviews the Campus Accountability Report (CAR) to monitor performance in terms of student achievement at both the campus and program levels. Measures will include retention, placement, and licensure or certification examination pass rates, if applicable. When this review indicates that the achievement of an institution's students is below benchmark, the Council, at its discretion, will take action consistent with the guidelines outlined in Appendix L, Student Achievement Standards and Campus Accountability Reports.

2-1-810. *Student Loan Cohort Default Rates Review.* The Council will monitor an institution's student loan cohort default rates. An institution may be subject to additional reports or actions based upon these rates.

TITLE II GENERAL PROCEDURES

Chapter 2 Institutional Changes

INTRODUCTION

Approval by ACICS is required before substantive changes are published, advertised, and implemented, and institutions must notify ACICS of other changes. The material in this chapter explains the evaluation procedures that ACICS will follow for approving substantive and non-substantive changes.

2-2-100 – SUBSTANTIVE CHANGES

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:

- (a) any change in the established mission or objectives of the institution as described in Section 2-2-103;
- (b) any change in the legal status, form of control, or ownership of the institution as described in Section 2-2-400;
- (c) the addition of programs that are considered to be out of scope. Programs considered out of scope are those that represent a significant departure from existing programs that were offered when the agency last evaluated the institution as described in Section 2-2-105;
- (d) the addition of courses or programs that represent a significant departure from the existing delivery method utilized when the agency last evaluated the institution as described in Section 2-2-106;
- (e) the addition of programs of study at a degree or credential level different from that which is included in the institution's current scope of accreditation as described in Section 2-2-107;
- (f) a change from clock hours to credit hours as described in Section 2-2-108;
- (g) a 25 percent or greater change in the number of clock or credit hours awarded for successful completion of a program as described in Section 2-2-109;
- (h) the acquisition of any other institution (See Section 2-2-104(a) and 2-2-400) or any program (See Section 2-2-10 and 2-2-107) or location of another institution;
- (i) the addition of a permanent location at a site at which the institution is conducting a teach-out for students of another institution that has ceased operating before all students have completed their program of study;
- (j) the entering into a contract under which an institution or organization not certified to participate in the Title IV, HEA programs offers more than 25 percent of one or more of the accredited institution's educational programs as described in Standard 2-2-505; and
- (k) the establishment of a branch campus or learning site geographically apart from the main campus at which the institution offers at least 50 percent of an educational program as described in Standard 2-2-104.

It is required that the change occur within one year of approval. If the institution does not implement the change in this time frame, it shall notify the Council, and reapply for the change if it still seeks implementation. Requests to extend the proposed start date beyond one year of the initial date must be submitted to the Council.

2-2-102. *Effect of Extensive Substantive Changes.* The Council shall conduct a comprehensive on-site evaluation of the institution if substantive changes that have been made or are proposed are sufficiently extensive that the institution's capacity to maintain compliance with accreditation standards requires an immediate assessment.

Substantive changes are defined by Council as “extensive” when the types and/or number of changes are so substantial that the nature and scope of the accredited institution will no longer be the same since last evaluated and in its place a new institution has evolved.

2-2-103. *Change of Institutional Mission.* It is the responsibility of the institution to secure approval from the Council prior to implementing any change in the mission or objectives of the institution.

2-2-104. *Initiation of Additional Campus Activity.* An additional activity includes any ongoing instructional activity offered at a site away from the main facility of an institution. Activity at a site that meets the Council’s definition of a “Branch” is described in Section 1-3-100, Classification of Campuses. Activity at a site that does not meet the definition of a Branch Campus is referred to below as a “Learning Site.” Reporting requirements are as follows:

- (a) *Branch Campus.* It is the responsibility of the institution to secure approval from ACICS of the intention to initiate a branch campus before the branch begins classes. If approved, activity must be initiated at the branch campus within one year of the proposed start date. A branch campus must be approved by the Council before advertising, recruiting, and enrollment may take place. Failure to secure approval from ACICS prior to the initiation of a branch campus may call into question the accreditation of the institution.

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

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

Any institution which (1) is required to submit a financial improvement plan to the Financial Review Committee, or which (2) is under a deferral action by the Council must request and receive prior permission from ACICS for the initiation of any branch campuses. An institution under a show-cause directive or a negative action will not receive approval from ACICS for the initiation of any branch campus while the action is in effect.

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

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

2-2-105. Addition of Programs Out of Scope. It is the responsibility of the institution to secure approval from the Council of the intention to initiate the addition of programs that represent a significant departure or are out of scope from existing educational programs that were offered when the agency last evaluated the institution. The institution or campus must initiate the approval process through the submission of a new program application and required documents for Council review and approval before being included in the institution's scope of accreditation.

2-2-106. Initiation of Distance Education (Online) or New Instructional Delivery Method. It is the responsibility of the institution to secure approval from the Council of the intention to initiate online delivery if all courses and programs within the institution are currently approved for residential or face-to-face instructional delivery method. Any significant change in instructional delivery method requires prior Council approval.

The institution or campus must initiate the approval process through the submission of a new program application and required documentation information for Council review and approval before being included into the institution's current scope of accreditation.

2-2-107. Expansion of Program Offerings to Higher Credential Level. It is the responsibility of the institution to secure approval from the Council of the intention to initiate a program at a higher credential level.

The institution or campus must initiate the approval process through the submission of a new program application and required documentation for Council review and approval before being included into the institution's scope of accreditation.

2-2-108. Initiation of Change from Clock to Credit Hour Offering. It is the responsibility of the institution to secure approval from the Council of the intention to initiate a change from clock to credit hours in its program offering through the submission of an application and required documentation.

2-2-109. Increasing the Number of Clock or Credit Hours. It is the responsibility of the institution to secure approval from the Council of the intention to initiate a change of 25 percent or greater in the number of clock or credit hours awarded for successful completion of a program. If the percentage is less than 25 percent but results in a change in the credential level, the credential level will be evaluated to be within the institution's scope of accreditation.

The institution or campus must initiate the approval process through the submission of a new program application and required documentation for Council review and approval before being included into the institution's scope of accreditation. The institution shall notify the Council if it does not implement the changes within one year of approval. Requests to extend the proposed start date beyond one year of the initial date must be submitted to the Council.

2-2-110. Evaluation, Approval, and Monitoring of Substantive Change Activity. All activity for which approval is sought will be evaluated by ACICS before approval is granted. Following is a description of those evaluations.

- (a) *Branch Campus.* Initial inclusion of a branch campus within the scope of the accreditation of the institution may be granted 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.

A branch campus that is granted initial inclusion 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.

Only after a determination of acceptability and notification to the institution of the decision, may the institution consider 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.

- (b) *Learning Site*. The Council must 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.

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 inclusion of the learning site or (2) deny the application.

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

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

- (c) *New Programs of Study*. Changes to an institution's scope of accreditation resulting from the proposed initiation of a new program of study, must be approved by the Council following a comprehensive review of supporting materials specific to the substantive change. Only upon approval of the substantive change to the institution's scope of accreditation is the institution or campus authorized to advertise, recruit, and enroll students for the new program.

To further monitor the institution or campus which initiated the substantive change to the institution's scope of accreditation, an on-site evaluation visit will be conducted as directed by the Council.

Following this visit, the Council may require the institution to submit additional information to satisfy areas of concern identified during the evaluation.

2-2-120 – INITIATION AND EVALUATION OF CHANGES WITHIN CURRENT SCOPE

All programs and delivery methods must be within the institution's scope of accreditation and receive ACICS approval before recruiting or enrolling students. Programs offered by the institution are appropriately evaluated during the institution's initial grant of accreditation and renewal of accreditation evaluations.

The initiation of a new program, or a change in the overall objective of a currently approved program or in the credential level of an existing program, requires approval prior to implementation. The initiation of courses and programs offered via an online modality also requires approval prior to implementation. An application form and any additional documentation specified by ACICS must be submitted. Programs that have not started within one year of the proposed start date and programs that have been inactive for at least two years must be surrendered as defined in Section 2-2-503, *Termination of Programs*. Institutions or campuses must have demonstrated compliance with ACICS standards at a lower credential level before requesting a new program at a higher credential level.

Any institution or campus on interim reporting to the Financial Review Committee may be required to obtain prior permission from ACICS for the initiation of any new program. Any institution or campus under a compliance warning, a show-cause directive or a negative action must obtain prior approval to apply for a new program. Additionally, any institution or campus subject to a comprehensive on-site evaluation as a result of extensive substantive changes must obtain prior permission from ACICS for the initiation of any new program.

2-2-121. Changes to Existing Programs. Changes to existing or currently approved programs fall under (a) extensive changes and (b) non-substantive changes.

- (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 compliance warning 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:
 - 1) a 25 percent change in the number of clock or credit hours awarded for successful completion of an existing program; and
 - 2) a change from clock hours to credit hours.
- (b) *Non-substantive Changes.* These include minor changes to existing programs which do not substantially alter the scope, objectives and nature of the programs as described in Section 2-2-151.

2-2-122. Substantial Changes to Nonmain Campus Operations. Prior notification to ACICS is required when an institution decides to make substantial changes to the operation of a nonmain campus. Notice shall be made in writing to the President, who is authorized to act on behalf of ACICS in approving such changes. Failure to notify and receive approval prior to substantial change of activity may call into question the accreditation of the institution, and further evaluation may be required.

2-2-151. Non-Substantive Program Changes. Institutions and campuses are required to notify the Council of all non-substantive changes to existing program prior to implementation. The following non-substantive changes will be acknowledged:

- (a) less than 25 percent change in existing contact hours; credits awarded, curriculum content (courses offered), or program length of a currently approved program within a 12-month period;
- (b) a change in the name of an existing program that does not change the overall objective of the program; and
- (c) a change from semester to quarter credit hours or vice versa.

If the institution applies for acknowledgment of non-substantive program changes prior to implementation but chooses not to implement the changes within one year of approval, it must notify the Council. Requests to extend the proposed start date beyond one year of the initial date must be submitted to the Council.

2-2-152. Non-Substantive Changes to Campus Operations. As a condition for maintaining its accreditation status, the institution is expected to keep ACICS informed of changes affecting campus operations.

2-2-200 – REDESIGNATION OF CAMPUSES

2-2-201. Branch-to-Main Campus Reclassification. A branch is eligible for evaluation as the freestanding main campus of a separately accredited, single campus institution only if it has been operating as an approved branch for at least two years. Branches seeking main campus status must submit the appropriate application, and audited financial statements certified by an independent certified public accountant for the institution's most recent fiscal year. The Council reserves the right to conduct an on-site quality assurance monitoring visit at any time as it deems necessary.

2-2-202. Reassignment and Consolidation of Campuses. Institutions seeking to reassign the classification of a campus or campuses or to consolidate groups of campuses must submit the appropriate application and documentation, including the rationale to the Council. The Council will consider the institution's requested grant expiration date for the newly formed group of campuses and assign modified or full-team evaluation visits as necessary to bring the grant lengths of the various groups of campuses into alignment. The scope and timing of these visits will be based on the length of the grant of accreditation for each group being reassigned or consolidated, as well as a review of determining factors such as retention and placement rates, reporting status, complaints and adverse, and any other pertinent information. No campus will be given an extension of its current grant longer than one year for purposes of the consolidation, and new campuses moving through the branch inclusion process will be visited as part of that process, regardless of the consolidation proposal. The Council reserves the right to assign an on-site evaluation visit at either the main campus or branch campuses at any time as

it deems necessary.

2-2-300 – CLOSING OF A CAMPUS

In all instances of termination of activity at either main or nonmain campuses, ACICS must be assured that provision is made for presently enrolled students to complete the program of instruction for which they have enrolled, either at that institution or at another acceptable institution. In addition, ACICS must be assured that student academic transcripts are safely stored and protected and that the transcripts will be accessible to students and alumni indefinitely. ACICS and the appropriate regulatory agency must be notified of the arrangements made in this regard.

2-2-301. *Closing of a Main Campus.* An institution is required to notify ACICS as far in advance as possible when it plans to cease operation. It must complete the appropriate forms describing its plans for teaching out its students and for storing and servicing its records and other information necessary for effecting the cessation of operations as smoothly as possible. The institution's grant of accreditation will be revoked effective its final date of academic activity.

When ACICS receives information from any source that an institution has ceased to operate, it shall immediately take steps to verify the information. If the Council believes that the institution, in fact, has ceased operations, the grant of accreditation is summarily suspended. Such action is authorized without prior notice or hearing and with immediate public notice.

The institution shall be notified of the summary suspension in writing at its address of record. Within 10 days after receipt of the suspension notice, the institution may petition ACICS for an expedited determination of whether such suspension should be withdrawn. If no petition is filed within 10 days, the suspension automatically shall become a revocation effective as of the date of notice of suspension. Alternatively, should the closed institution provide ACICS with information regarding its final date of academic activity, the suspension shall become a revocation effective as of the date provided by the institution.

2-2-302. *Closing of a Nonmain Campus.* An institution is required to notify ACICS as far in advance as possible when it plans to close a nonmain campus. It must complete the appropriate forms describing its plans for teaching out its students and for storing and servicing its records and other information necessary for effecting the cessation of operations as smoothly as possible. The nonmain campus will cease to be included in the institution's grant of accreditation effective its final date of academic activity.

2-2-303. *Teach-out.* The Council will require an institution to provide a teach-out plan in the following instances:

- (a) The Secretary of Education notifies ACICS that it has initiated an emergency action against an institution or an action to limit, suspend, or terminate participation in Title IV programs, and that a teach-out plan is required;
- (b) ACICS acts to deny or withdraw the accreditation of an institution;
- (c) The institution notifies ACICS that it intends to cease operations or close a location that provides 100% of at least one program;
- (d) A state licensing or authorizing agency notifies ACICS that an institution's license or legal authorization to provide educational programs has been or will be revoked; or
- (e) A result of adverse information, high cohort default rate(s), low retention and/or placement rate(s), financial instability, or other concerns that may call into question the institution's ability to continue to serve the educational needs and objectives of its students or to continue as an on-going concern.
- (f) At the discretion of the Council, the teach-out plan may include a formal teach-out agreement with another institution.

If an institution closes or announces its intent to close, the Council will work to the extent feasible with the U.S. Department of Education and the appropriate state regulatory agencies to ensure that students are given

reasonable opportunities to complete their education without additional charge. An institution that closes without completing its contractual training obligations to students must refund all unearned revenue.

Should an institution enter into a teach-out agreement with another accredited institution, the signed agreement must be submitted to and approved by the Council prior to implementation. In addition to general information on the institutions entering into the teach-out agreement, the agreement must demonstrate the following:

- (a) that students will be provided, without additional charge, all of the instruction promised but not yet provided by the closing institution; and
- (b) that the teach-out institution is geographically proximate to the closing institution or otherwise can provide students with reasonable access to its programs and services, and that it has the necessary experience, resources, and support services to provide an educational program that is of acceptable quality and is reasonably similar in content, structure, and scheduling to that provided by the closing institution.

2-2-400 – OWNERSHIP OR CONTROL

The Council at all times must know who is in control of an accredited institution. The transfer of ownership or a change in the control of an institution is a substantial change that must be approved by the Council before continuation of accreditation can occur. Any institution or owning corporation that is contemplating a transaction that may result in a change of ownership/control must submit the appropriate application and supporting documentation to the Council for approval 30 days prior to consummating the proposed change. Failure to provide this notification in a timely manner may negatively impact the continuation of accreditation. Transactions that constitute a change of ownership/control vary depending on the structure of the entity that owns or controls the institution.

Accredited institutions are owned or controlled by one of several types of corporations, by a limited partnership with a corporate general partner, or by a limited liability company, each of which is defined in the following subsections. In cases where the entity that directly owns or controls the institution is a subsidiary of another entity, the Council requires information on and monitors the ownership of the controlling entity, the parent entity, and any entities in the chain between those two.

- (a) *Privately held corporation.* A privately held corporation is one that operates for profit in which one or more stockholders own the voting stock of the corporation. The stock is marketable, but a majority of the voting stock is not traded on public markets overseen by governmental agencies such as the Securities and Exchange Commission in the United States. The control of a privately held corporation is vested in those in control of a majority of the voting stock of the corporation.
- (b) *Publicly traded corporation.* A publicly traded corporation is one that operates for profit in which a majority of the voting stock is traded on public markets overseen by governmental agencies such as the Securities and Exchange Commission in the United States. The control of a publicly traded corporation is vested in the voting members of the board of directors of the corporation.
- (c) *Not-for-profit corporation.* A not-for-profit corporation is one that has been determined by a governmental agency to be tax exempt for reasons the same as or similar to those set forth in Section 501 of the Internal Revenue Code of the United States. The control of a not-for-profit corporation is vested in the voting members of the board of directors of the corporation.
- (d) *Limited partnership with corporate general partner.* A limited partnership is one that is organized in accordance with the partnership laws of its home jurisdiction. The control of the limited partnership is vested in the general partner, which must be a corporation as defined in subsection (a), (b), or (c) above.
- (e) *Limited liability company.* A limited liability company is one that has been granted a certificate of approval under the laws of the state corporation office or other appropriate regulatory body in its home jurisdiction. A limited liability company may or may not issue certificates of ownership. The control of a limited liability company is vested in the members, whose ownership interests are defined in the limited liability company operating agreement or other such governing document, who are in control of a majority of the direct or beneficial ownership interest in the company.

2-2-401. Change of Ownership or Control. A change of ownership or control generally means that a transaction has occurred whereby a new person, combination of persons, or entity can exercise control of a corporation or limited liability company as described in Section 2-2-400. The following subsections outline the typical changes of ownership or control of the three types of corporations that own accredited institutions, including corporate general partners in limited partnerships, and limited liability companies. Transactions other than those outlined below, however, may constitute a change of ownership or control, and the Council reserves the right in its discretion to make the determination of whether a change of ownership or control has occurred in all cases. Institutions, therefore, must keep the Council informed of all substantive changes in the ownership of stock and the composition of the board of directors.

The Council, for purposes of determining ownership or control, views couples in a legally recognized marriage or partnership as a single entity, and it views closely related family groups as a single entity in most cases where all of the present and future relevant stockholders actively participate in the management of the corporation.

In addition to the transactions outlined below, any change from one type of entity to another as defined in Section 2-2-400 constitutes a change of ownership or control. Institutions also are reminded that nonmain campuses cannot be bought or sold independently of their main campus.

- (a) *Privately held corporation.* A change of ownership of a privately held corporation occurs as a result of any of the following transactions:
 - (i) the transfer of 50% or more of the total outstanding voting stock from one party or parties to another party or parties;
 - (ii) a transfer of voting stock that results in the ownership of 50% or more of the total outstanding voting stock by any party other than any previous owner of 50% or more of the total outstanding voting stock;
 - (iii) a transfer of voting stock whereby a stockholder's ownership of outstanding voting stock decreases from more than 50% to 50% or less, or from 50% to less than 50%; or
 - (iv) any other transaction whereby a stockholder or group of stockholders who previously could not exercise control of the corporation as described in Section 2-2-400(a) now can exercise control.
- (b) *Privately held corporation.* A change of control of a privately held corporation occurs as a result of a transfer of ownership interest within an immediate family.
- (c) *Publicly traded corporation.* A change of ownership of a publicly traded corporation occurs as a result of any of the following transactions or events:
 - (i) the change of 50% or more of the voting members of the board of directors in any rolling, 12-month period;
 - (ii) a change in the number of voting members of the board of directors in any rolling, 12-month period that will allow a group of directors to exercise control who could not exercise control before the change;
 - (iii) the acquisition of outstanding voting shares by any entity whereby that entity owns 50% or more of the total outstanding voting shares; or
 - (iv) any other transaction that is deemed by an appropriate governmental agency to constitute a change of control, including but not limited to a transaction that requires the corporation to file Form 8-K with the Securities and Exchange Commission of the United States.
- (d) *Publicly traded corporation.* A change of control occurs as a result of any change of 25% or more of voting stock.
- (e) *Not-for-profit corporation.* A change of control of a not-for-profit corporation occurs as a result of any of the following occurrences:

- (i) the change of 50% or more of the voting members of the board of directors in any rolling, 24-month period; or
 - (ii) a change in the number of voting members of the board of directors in any rolling, 24-month period that will allow a group of directors to exercise control who could not exercise control before the change; or
 - (iii) a fundamental change to its governance structure.
- (f) *Limited liability company.* A change of ownership or control of a limited liability company occurs as a result of any of the following transactions:
- (i) the transfer of 50% or more of the direct or beneficial ownership interest from one member or members to another member or members;
 - (ii) a transfer of direct or beneficial ownership interest that results in the holding of 50% or more of the total direct or beneficial ownership interest by any member other than any previous member who owned 50% or more of the total direct or beneficial ownership interest;
 - (iii) a transfer of direct or beneficial ownership interest whereby a member's direct or beneficial ownership interest decreases from more than 50% to 50% or less, or from 50% to less than 50%; or
 - (iv) any other transaction whereby a member or group of members who previously could not exercise control of the company as described in Section 2-2-400(e) now can exercise control.

A change of ownership or control, however, has not occurred when there is a transfer of assets among wholly owned subsidiary corporations or between a wholly owned subsidiary corporation and its parent corporation; a transfer of assets from a subsidiary corporation to its parent corporation where the parent corporation owns a majority of the outstanding stock of the subsidiary corporation; or a transfer of assets among subsidiary corporations where the common parent owns a majority of the outstanding stock of the subsidiary corporations.

2-2-402. Contingent Sales. The Council will not grant reinstatement of accreditation after a change of ownership or control if the sale of the stock or assets triggering the change of ownership is contingent on approval of the transaction by the Council. If the transaction is rescinded as a result of a condition subsequent to the change of ownership or control of an institution, then the previous owner must apply to the Council for reinstatement.

2-2-403. Change of Ownership or Control Review Procedures. Institutions must submit Part I of the change of ownership/control application 30 days prior to the transfer of ownership or change in control occurs. Part II of the change of ownership/control application must be submitted within five business days after the transaction. The following procedures govern the Council's review of change of ownership/control:

- (a) *Automatic Discontinuation.* Any change of ownership or control results in the immediate and automatic discontinuation of an institution's grant of accreditation. The grant of accreditation may be reinstated only upon application to and approval by the Council. Because the discontinuation results without action or prior approval on the part of the Council, this change in status does not constitute withdrawal of accreditation and is not a negative action.
- (b) *Reinstatement.* After the grant of accreditation has been discontinued, it may be reinstated at the discretion of the Council within 30 days of the change in ownership/control. Those terms and conditions of the reinstatement process are set forth in policy statements issued to the field and in the change of ownership/control application document that institutions must file to initiate the reinstatement process. The Council will conduct a quality assurance monitoring visit within six months of the effective date of a change of ownership/control. The new owner(s) and the chief on-site administrator must provide evidence of attending an ACICS Accreditation Workshop within one year of the change of ownership or attend an Accreditation Workshop prior to the quality assurance monitoring visit.
- (c) *Effect.* Until the Council approves a reinstatement of the grant of accreditation, the accreditation of the institution remains in abeyance. If approval of the application for reinstatement is withheld, the matter will be treated procedurally as a deferral or a denial, as the case may be. (See Title II, Chapter 3, Council Actions, for further information.)

2-2-500 – PROGRAMS OF STUDY REGULATIONS

2-2-501. *Evaluation of Programs for Purposes of Federal Financial Aid.* As part of its evaluation of an institution for initial accreditation or renewal of accreditation, ACICS will review the institution's policies and procedures for determining credit hour assignments for purposes of awarding federal financial aid. ACICS will evaluate the reliability and accuracy of the institution's assignment of credit hours, as defined by federal requirements, to courses and programs and will determine whether this assignment conforms to commonly accepted practice in higher education.

- (a) *Credit Hours for Credit-Hour Programs.* The evaluation of credit hour programs, as defined by federal requirements, for purposes of financial aid is based on the following federal definition of a credit hour:

Except as provided in federal regulations, a credit hour is an amount of work represented in intended learning outcomes and verified by evidence of student achievement that is an institutionally established equivalency that reasonably approximates not less than—(1) One hour of classroom or direct faculty instruction and a minimum of two hours of out of class student work each week for approximately fifteen weeks for one semester or trimester hour of credit, or ten to twelve weeks for one quarter hour of credit, or the equivalent amount of work over a different amount of time; or (2) At least an equivalent amount of work as required in paragraph (1) of this definition for other academic activities as established by the institution including laboratory work, internships, practica, studio work, and other academic work leading to the award of credit hours.

- (b) *Credit Hours for Programs that are neither Credit-Hour nor Clock-Hour Programs.* Clock hour programs as defined in federal regulations may not assign credit hours for the purpose of awarding federal financial aid. However, undergraduate degree programs of less than two years in length and non-degree programs that are not fully transferrable to degree programs of at least two years in length (with at least two graduates) at the same institution are eligible to convert clock hours to credit hours for purposes of awarding federal financial aid. In doing so, these programs may seek to combine a minimum number of hours in a range of hours of student work outside of class with a required minimum number of hours of instruction alone to meet or exceed a total number of clock hours of instruction. The evaluation of these clock-to-credit hour programs is based upon the following federal conversion formulas:

The institution's student work outside of class combined with the clock hours of instruction meet or exceed the following numeric requirements:

- (i) A semester hour must include at least 37.5 clock hours of instruction;
- (ii) A trimester hour must include at least 37.5 clock hours of instruction; and
- (iii) A quarter hour must include at least 25 clock hours of instruction; and

The clock hours of instruction alone meet or exceed the following numeric requirements:

- (a) A semester hour must include at least 30 clock hours of instruction;
- (b) A trimester hour must include at least 30 clock hours of instruction; and
- (c) A quarter hour must include a least 20 hours of instruction.

2-2-502. *Program Show-Cause or Compliance Warning.* When the Council determines that a program at a campus of the institution has fallen below the compliance standard for retention, placement, or licensure or certification examination pass rates, the institution will be provided in writing with a show-cause or compliance warning regarding the alleged deficiency in accordance with the guidelines outlined in Appendix L, Student Achievement Standards and Campus Accountability Reports.

2-2-503. *Termination of Programs.* The withdrawal of approval for a program following the issuance of a program show-cause or compliance warning or a decision by an institution to terminate any program voluntarily must be appropriately communicated to all interested publics. These publics include, but are not limited to, students, governmental agencies, the local community, and ACICS.

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

Council-directed withdrawal of approval for a program conditions the institution's grant of accreditation with respect to the inclusion of the program and therefore is appealable to the Council. Due to the limited nature and narrow scope of the withdrawal of program approval, the appeal to the Council may be in writing only. An institution may not initiate the new program application process for a program it was directed to teach-out until after it has requested and received approval from the Council to do so, no sooner than the completion of the program's teach-out. To reinstate a voluntarily terminated program, the institution must initiate a new program application process.

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

2-2-504. *Contracts or Agreements with Accredited Institutions.* A written arrangement between one institution eligible to participate in HEA Title IV financial aid programs and another eligible institution or with a consortium of such institutions permits an institution to arrange for a portion of its approved program to be delivered by another accredited institution. Contracts or consortium agreements describing these arrangements must be in writing and must be disclosed in the catalog. Institutions are advised that specific state and federal regulations may apply.

- (a) The entire consortium agreement must be submitted to and approved by the Council prior to the institution's participation in the arrangement. The institution seeking approval of such an agreement must submit documentation that demonstrates that the other institution or the members of the consortium that will deliver instruction hold institutional accreditation from an accrediting agency recognized by the U.S. Department of Education and that the portion of the program to be delivered by any other institution has been approved by that institution's accrediting agency.
- (b) The consortium agreement must identify how the curriculum and instruction will be monitored, how curriculum revisions will be undertaken, and how student grievances will be addressed. The institution seeking approval of a consortium agreement must acknowledge in writing that it retains ultimate responsibility for the delivery of its programs and the satisfaction of its students.
- (c) More than 50% of the program must be delivered by the institution that awards the academic credential.

2-2-505. *Contracts with Unaccredited Institutions or Entities.* An institution may enter into a contract with an unaccredited institution or entity for the delivery of up to 25% of a program of study.

The institution must submit the contract and provide the following information to ACICS for review and approval prior to the initiation of the contract:

- (a) a full catalog description of the program and the services to be provided by the contractor;
- (b) a systematic plan for administrative and student evaluations of instructors provided by the contractor;
- (c) evidence of the qualifications of faculty to teach the contracted courses;

- (d) a description of the instructional facilities provided by the contractor; and
- (e) plans for the completion of the program should the contractor fail to provide contracted services.

2-2-506. *Articulation Agreements with Secondary Schools.* An institution may enter into an articulation agreement with a secondary school to transfer credit for courses taken at the secondary level that are equal to courses offered in a postsecondary institution. Articulation agreements must be in writing, periodically reviewed, signed, and dated. The institution must maintain a file consisting of the following: (1) a Letter of Intent to Articulate signed by both institutions specifying the numbers and titles of courses to be articulated, (2) a written description of the standards for acceptable transfer of credit, and (3) a comparison of the course objectives of the secondary and postsecondary courses(s) with signed approvals of both institutions. These credits appear on both the secondary and postsecondary transcripts.

2-2-507. *International Partnership Agreements.* An ACICS-accredited institution may enter into an international partnership agreement with an institution of higher education in a geographic location other than that of the United States or its territories. At least 25% of the program must be delivered by the institution that awards the academic credential.

The ACICS-accredited institution must submit an international partnership agreement to the Council and provide the following information to ACICS for review and approval prior to the initiation of the partnership agreement:

- (a) evidence provided by the institution or agency that the international partner and the programs to be delivered are recognized by an educational approval agency equivalent to an accrediting agency recognized by the US Department of Education;
- (b) a full catalog description of the program and the services to be provided through the partnership agreement;
- (c) a plan which describes recruitment, admission, standards of satisfactory academic progress;
- (d) a plan which describes student financial relations, including tuition and fees, and refund policies;
- (e) a description of the program(s) of study or courses offered;
- (f) a systematic plan for administration and student evaluations of instructors provided by in the partnership agreement;
- (g) evidence of the qualifications of faculty to teach;
- (h) a description of the instructional facilities at the international site;
- (i) a plan for the completion of the program(s) should the international partner fail to provide agreed upon services;
- (j) a plan for the safety and security of students, faculty, and staff; and
- (k) specify which programs or portions are to be delivered via distance education and how the institutions will monitor growth.

2-2-600 – OTHER CHANGES

2-2-601. *Change of Name.* The Council must be notified and grant approval when an institution decides to change its name. Forms are supplied for the institution to explain and justify the change. The President has the authority to review and approve a change in name. The following limitations apply: “university” may be used only by those institutions that offer a master’s degree. These limitations are effective for all Change of Name applications received after January 1, 1997. All institutional names approved prior to that date may be retained.

2-2-602. *Change of Location.* The Council must be notified and grant approval when an institution decides to change its physical location or its address and prior to the initiation of classes at any new location. Forms are supplied for the institution to explain and justify the change. The President has the authority to review and approve a change of location. In addition, the President may require an on-site evaluation visit as part of its

review in order to determine compliance with Council standards.

2-2-700—VOLUNTARY WITHDRAWAL

If an institution seeks to voluntarily withdraw from its grant of accreditation by ACICS, or the inclusion of one or more of its nonmain campuses from within its grant of accreditation, it must submit written notice to ACICS of its request. The notice must be signed by the chief executive or administrative officer of the institution and indicate the requested date of effect. The institution's grant of accreditation will be revoked as of the effective date, or retroactive to the date that all outstanding obligations, including payment of fees, had previously been fulfilled by the institution.

TITLE II GENERAL PROCEDURES

Chapter 3 Council Actions

INTRODUCTION

When the Council has considered all of the information and reports submitted as a result of the accrediting process, it will make a judgment as to an institution's compliance with the *Accreditation Criteria*. The Council's decision is based on the extent of an institution's compliance. The judgment made is referred to as a "Council action." The actions which the Council may take are described in this chapter. Procedures available to institutions to challenge those actions and the maximum time frames for achieving final disposition of those actions by the Council also are explained. There are four general areas of Council actions: accreditation granted, accreditation deferred, accreditation denied, and accreditation withdrawn.

If the Council determines that an institution is not in compliance with the *Accreditation Criteria*, it will take prompt adverse action against the institution, or it will require the institution to take appropriate action to bring itself into compliance with the *Accreditation Criteria* within a time frame specified by the Council after the institution has been notified that it is not in compliance. That time frame will not exceed and may be less than the following:

- (a) twelve months, if the longest program is less than one year in length;
- (b) eighteen months, if the longest program is at least one year, but less than two years in length; and
- (c) two years, if the longest program is at least two years in length.

Similarly, if the Council determines that a campus's program is not in compliance with the *Accreditation Criteria*, it will take prompt adverse action on the program, or it will require the campus to take appropriate action to bring the program into compliance with the *Accreditation Criteria* within a time frame specified by the Council after the campus has been notified that its program is not in compliance. That time frame will also not exceed and may be less than the following:

- (a) twelve months, if the program is less than one year in length;
- (b) eighteen months, if the program is at least one year, but less than two years in length; and
- (c) two years, if the program is at least two years in length.

The above 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 completion or placement rates. In no event will the good-cause extension exceed one year.

2-3-100 – ACCREDITATION GRANTED

If an institution is found to be in compliance with the *Accreditation Criteria*, ACICS may grant accreditation for a specific period of time from a minimum of one year to a maximum of six years. The length of the grant shall be at the discretion of ACICS. A grant of accreditation for less than six years is not a negative action and, therefore, is not appealable.

The Council will not grant accreditation for a full six-year term if the grant is awarded following any hearing resulting from a previous action to deny accreditation.

2-3-200 – ACCREDITATION DEFERRED OR CONDITIONED

The Council, upon review of relevant information concerning an institution, may take any of the following actions at any time in accordance with the procedures described, up to and including a final adverse action.

2-3-210. *Deferral.* When Council determines there is insufficient evidence available to make a decision, it 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.

Deferral is, in effect, “no action at this time” and is not a negative action. Therefore, deferral is not an appealable action. Neither is deferral a final action. In all cases of deferral on renewal of accreditation of accredited institutions, the Council will extend the present grant of accreditation for a period sufficient for the institution to provide the information needed.

2-3-220. *Compliance Warning.* When the Council determines that an institution is not in compliance with the *Accreditation Criteria*, the Council may 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.

The Council may issue a show-cause directive or a denial action as the result of reviewing a compliance warning 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.

2-3-230. *Show-Cause Directive.* Show-cause is a status that the Council may impose on an institution when it determines that the institution or one of the campuses within the institution does not materially operate in accordance with the *Accreditation Criteria*. The Council will provide a written summary of the areas of noncompliance to the institution, which will be required to provide evidence of corrective action for review by ACICS. 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 be subject to an adverse action.

The issuance of a show-cause directive may be considered the basis for an institutional review, as defined in Section 2-3-500. A suspension order or denial action may be issued by ACICS as the result of the Council’s review of the institution’s response, and such action is considered a final action that may only be appealed to the Review Board of Appeals as described in Section 2-3-600. All institutions that are issued a show-cause directive by the Council 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 *Accreditation Criteria*.

2-3-231. *Result of Show-Cause.* The Council will not accept any applications for new programs or new campuses from any institution on show-cause unless approval is received in advance to submit such an application.

2-3-232. *Vacate Show-Cause.* If the institution demonstrates that it has addressed the Council’s concerns and is operating in compliance with the *Accreditation Criteria*, then ACICS may vacate the show-cause. The Council may also order a special visit at the institution’s expense before lifting the show-cause.

2-3-233. *Notification of Show-Cause.* 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 show-cause. The institution is required to notify immediately its current and prospective students along with the public of its show-cause status through appropriate means, including posting a prominent notice on its website.

2-3-300 – ACCREDITATION DENIED

Denial of an accredited status is characterized by the Council as a “withholding” action and is differentiated from suspension of accreditation, which is a “withdrawal” action. There are two levels of denial. One totally withholds accreditation of the institution or a branch; the other denies approval of a requested substantive change. Denial at either level constitutes a negative action and is challengeable by the institution. The process of challenge, however, is different for each level of denial as separately described in Sections 2-3-301, 2-3-302, and 2-3-303. In all cases of denial, the Council will give the institution written reasons for the denial, which are subject to modification through the appeals processes as later described and explained. Denial actions that are not appealed in accordance with the appeals procedures provided by the Council are considered final actions.

2-3-301. *Denial of Initial Grant.* An institution that objects to a Council decision to deny an application for an initial grant of accreditation has the right and will be given the opportunity to present its case and to be heard by a panel of the Review Board of Appeals. At such a hearing, the institution may not present new evidence for consideration and must follow the procedures described in Section 2-3-600.

2-3-302. *Denial of Renewal of Accreditation or Denial of Reinstatement of Accreditation Following Change of Ownership/Control.* An institution that objects to a Council decision to deny an application for a renewal of accreditation or reinstatement of accreditation following a change of ownership or control has the right to appeal the decision to the Review Board of Appeals pursuant to the procedures described in 2-3-604.

Additionally, in cases of affirmed denial of an application for renewal of accreditation, the Council may revoke the institution’s current grant of accreditation as described in Section 2-3-401.

2-3-303. *Denial Actions Not Affecting Overall Accreditation.* An institution that objects to a Council decision to deny an application for the addition of a program within the institution’s current scope of accreditation or any substantive change addressed in Section 2-2-101 will be given the opportunity to present its case in writing to the Council.

2-3-304. *Subsequent Action Following Denial.* If the denial not affecting overall accreditation is affirmed, the denial action becomes final and no further remedy is available to the institution. In all cases of denial, the Council retains discretion to specify whether and under what conditions the institution might initiate a request for consideration of the same type of application.

2-3-400 – ACCREDITATION WITHDRAWN

“Withdrawal of accreditation” differs from “denial of accreditation” in that denial rejects an institution’s application for an initial grant of accreditation or for a renewal of accreditation to take effect upon the expiration of an existing grant of accreditation; withdrawal of accreditation takes away a current grant of accreditation before its expiration. Accreditation may be withdrawn from an institution or inclusion withdrawn from a branch campus through two types of Council action: “revocation of accreditation” or “suspension of accreditation.”

2-3-401. *Revocation.* Revocation occurs without a hearing for any of the following reasons:

- (a) An institution, campus, State authority, U.S. Department of Education, Ministry of Education, or similar body notifies the Council that the institution has closed and/or ceased operation.
- (b) An institution notifies the Council that it is voluntarily withdrawing its grant of accreditation or the inclusion of one or more of its nonmain campuses from within its grant of accreditation.
- (c) An institution is denied a renewal of accreditation and does not appeal the action, or the action is affirmed by the Review Board of Appeals.
- (d) An institution or campus fails to submit a written response to a show-cause directive by the indicated due date.
- (e) An institution or campus whose accreditation has been summarily suspended does not challenge or appeal

the suspension within 10 days of receipt of the suspension notice. (See Section 2-2-301)

- (f) The institution or campus fails to file an annual report as required by the Council. (See Sections 2-1-801 and 2-1-802)
- (g) The institution or campus fails to pay its annual fees, application fees, other assessed fees, or evaluation expenses. (See Section 2-1-804)

A revocation action is not appealable. It requires an institution to start anew and to undergo the entire accreditation process to regain accreditation.

2-3-402. *Suspension.* Suspension of accreditation may occur when, in the judgment of ACICS, an institution or one of the campuses within the institution no longer complies with the criteria.

By way of illustration, ACICS might issue an order of suspension for reasons such as the following:

- (a) The institution or any of its components (a branch or new program, for example), is evaluated as directed by ACICS and is determined not to be in compliance with the criteria.
- (b) Periodic required reports filed by the institution or campus fail to conform to Council reporting requirements.
- (c) The institution or campus makes substantial or significant change, without notice to ACICS, in its operation, structure, governance, ownership, control, location, facilities, or programs of study.
- (d) The institution or campus fails to respond to or cooperate with attempts by the Council to make arrangements for a site evaluation.
- (e) The institution or campus has deviated from the criteria or other directives of ACICS.
- (f) The institution or campus fails to disclose any agreements, options, or other contractual arrangements between the institution and other parties which bear on the management or control of the main campus or its non-main campuses.

In all cases of suspension, the Council retains discretion to specify whether and under what conditions the institution might apply for an initial grant of accreditation or inclusion of a branch campus.

2-3-403. *Procedural Guarantees for Withdrawal by Suspension.* In all cases where accreditation is subject to withdrawal by suspension under Section 2-3-402, the institution is afforded the following procedural guarantees:

- (a) Opportunity for a review or hearing before ACICS on all material issues in controversy.
- (b) Written prior notice of the proceedings, the charges levied, and the standards by which the institution/campus ultimately is to be judged.
- (c) A decision on the record alone and a statement of reasons for the ultimate decision.
- (d) A right of appeal as provided in Section 2-3-600.
- (e) If the Review Board of Appeals affirms the withdrawal of accreditation by way of suspension, the appeal shall be deemed to be finally disposed of upon issuance of the decision and publication will be made as described in Section 2-3-607.

2-3-500 – COUNCIL REVIEW OR HEARING PROCEDURES

All institutional reviews will be in writing unless the Council exercises its sole discretion to require a hearing in person before the Council. The following procedures will govern reviews to be conducted by and hearings to be held before the Council:

- (a) The institution shall have the right to respond with evidence and facts concerning the areas of noncompliance with which it has been charged, to raise all reasonable questions, and to present evidence in opposition to or extenuation of the charges of noncompliance. Such written evidence must be submitted

by the date prescribed by the Council unless the institution can show that such information was not available before the submission date and that failure to make a timely submission was outside of the institution's control.

- (b) In the event that the Council requires a hearing in person, the acceptance of an in-person hearing must be made by a date determined by the Council, which will not be less than ten (10) days from the date of receipt of the letter of notification of show-cause directive. The acceptance of the in-person hearing must be in writing and signed by the chief executive officer of the institution. Upon receipt of the acceptance of the hearing, the Council will notify the institution of the procedures to follow to prepare for the hearing. The institution may send one or more representatives, including legal or financial counsel, to present its argument in opposition to or extenuation of the Council action. The Council transcribes all such hearings for its records. A copy of the transcript is available to the institution upon request.

2-3-501. *Institutional Review or Hearing Format.* Institutional reviews conducted by and hearings before the Council resulting from a show-cause directive and involving areas of noncompliance other than or in addition to financial concerns will take place before a panel of commissioners.

A review or hearing panel of at least three commissioners will be designated by the Council to review the written response or hear the presentation of the institution, if applicable. The panel will present its findings and its recommended action to the full Council, which will make the final decision within the time frames specified in Title II, Chapter 3.

2-3-502. *Financial Reviews or Hearings.* All reviews conducted by or hearings before the Council for financial concerns only will be deliberated or heard by a panel of at least three commissioners, which will include at least one representative of the Financial Review Committee. The panel will present its findings and its recommended action to the full Council, which will make the final decision within the time frames specified in Title II, Chapter 3.

2-3-600 – REVIEW BOARD APPEAL PROCESS

For those institutions that appeal to the Review Board of Appeals a denial action as described in Sections 2-3-301 and 2-3-302 or a suspension action as described in Section 2-3-402, the Council has established procedures designed to provide due process.

2-3-601. *Purpose and Authority of Review Board.* The Review Board of Appeals is a separate, independent appeals body established by the Council for the purpose of hearing appeals by institutions for actions specified in Sections 2-3-301, 2-3-302, and 2-3-402.

2-3-602. *Appointment of Members.* The Review Board of Appeals shall consist of a pool of fifteen (15) persons, all of whom have had experience in accreditation, who are appointed to three-year terms. An appointed person shall not have been a commissioner within one year prior to appointment. The Review Board of Appeals shall consist of at least two (2) academic representatives, two (2) administrative representatives, and three (3) public members, as defined in Appendix A.

A Review Board of Appeals panel of three to seven persons, depending on the scope and complexity of the matter or institution being reviewed, will be designated by the Council from the entire Review Board to hear an appeal from an institution. The Council also will designate one member of the Review Board panel to serve as chair. The selection and actions of the panel are subject to ACICS conflict of interest policies. A Review Board Panel will consist of at least one (1) academic, one administrative, and one public representative as defined in Appendix A.

2-3-603. *Jurisdiction and Authority.* The Review Board of Appeals is empowered to review, upon notice of appeal timely filed, actions specified in Sections 2-3-301, 2-3-302, and 2-3-402. The Review Board panel has the authority to:

- (a) affirm the decision of the Council;
- (b) amend the decision of the Council;
- (c) reverse the decision of the Council; or
- (d) remand the case to the Council with recommendations for further consideration.

The Review Board panel may amend or reverse the decision of the Council or remand the case to the Council for further consideration only if it finds the decision to be one of the following:

- (a) arbitrary, capricious, or otherwise in substantial disregard of the *Accreditation Criteria*; or
- (b) not supported by substantial evidence in the record on which the Council took the negative action.

The Review Board panel cannot amend or reverse the decision of the Council or remand the decision based on argument by the appellant that the Council action was disproportionate to the violations cited. The Review Board panel is further limited in that it has no jurisdiction or authority concerning the reasonableness of the *Accreditation Criteria*.

A determination by the Review Board panel to affirm the Council's decision is effective immediately upon the Review Board panel's action. A determination by the Review Board panel to amend, reverse, or remand the Council's decision will be referred to the Council for implementation and further action.

Except as noted below, Review Board panels will not consider any evidence that was not in the record before the Council. Documents reviewed by or available to evaluation teams are not considered to be part of the record unless they are appended to the team report or the institution submits them to the Council as part of the institution's response to the evaluation team report.

An exception to the policy on evidence will be made where a final adverse action is based solely on the failure of an institution to comply with the standards of financial stability. In that case, the institution on one occasion may seek review of significant financial information that was unavailable to the institution prior to the determination of the adverse action and that bears materially on the financial deficiencies identified by the Council. The Financial Review Committee will determine if the new financial information submitted by the institution is significant and material. If these criteria are met, the Financial Review Committee will provide a report of its review to the Council, which then will reconsider its adverse action in light of the new information. If the Council reaffirms the adverse action, the Financial Review Committee report and the result of the Council's recommendation will become part of the record under review before the Review Board.

The panel acts on behalf of the entire Review Board. Therefore, a decision of a Review Board panel is final and will not be considered further by the full Review Board. In cases remanded to the Council for reconsideration, the Review Board panel will identify specific issues that the Council must address. With respect to a Review Board panel decision that is implemented by or remanded to the Council, the Council will act in a manner consistent with the Review Board panel's decisions or instructions.

2-3-604. *Request for Appeal.* To exercise its right of appeal, the institution must file a request for a hearing before the Review Board of Appeals and submit the appropriate fee within a time frame determined by the Council, normally not more than 10 business days from date of receipt of notification of the denial or suspension action. The request for a hearing must be in writing and signed by the chief executive officer of the institution. Upon receipt of the request for a hearing and the appropriate fee, pursuant to the ACICS Schedule of Fees, the Council will notify the institution of procedures to follow in preparing for it.

2-3-605. *Hearing of Appeal.* The hearing will be held at a time and place designated by the chair of the Review Board panel. Three members will constitute a quorum.

If the appealing institution intends to submit a written appeal brief or statement of points, it must be received by

the Review Board panel and the Council at least 15 business days prior to the hearing date. The Council's reply brief must be received by the panel and the appealing institution at least seven business days prior to the hearing. The Review Board panel chair will preside at the hearing and will rule on all procedural matters. There will be no right to cross-examine the opposing party or its representatives.

The Council transcribes all Review Board hearings for its own records. A copy of the transcript is available to the institution upon request.

The hearing shall be as informal as may be reasonable and appropriate under the circumstances. Both the Council and the institution may appear by or with counsel or other representative. The institution may waive a personal appearance, in which case the matter will be handled solely on briefs.

The chair of the Review Board panel may promulgate such additional rules of procedure for the scheduling and conduct of hearings as are consistent with these procedures.

2-3-606. *Decision of the Review Board.* Every decision must have the concurrence of the majority of the Review Board panel. Within a reasonable time after the conclusion of the hearing, the hearing panel shall issue in writing its decision with a statement of its reasons and recommendation, if any, to the Council. The decision will indicate those members of the Review Board panel who concur with the decision. Dissenting opinions may be filed. The majority decision with dissenting opinions, if any, will be furnished to the institution.

2-3-607. *Council Receipt of Review Board Decisions.* Decisions by the Review Board panel are transmitted to the Council for disposition and publication.

If the Review Board panel affirms the prior decision of the Council, there is no further remedy available within these procedures. The Council's decision is final, and immediate publication is automatic. If the Review Board panel remands the matter, the case shall be deemed to be finally disposed of when the Council takes final action on remand.

2-3-700 – COMPLAINTS AND ADVERSE INFORMATION

Procedurally apart from Council actions heretofore described and explained, ACICS receives and is obligated to investigate legitimate complaints about an institution from any source, that in any way pertain to ACICS criteria.

Also, ACICS periodically receives and may investigate information from federal or state agencies or other accrediting agencies, or through public media sources, which may indicate possible criteria violations. Adverse information may include, but is not limited to, low completion rates, low placement rates, high default rates, tuition refund problems, negative audits or program reviews, and governmental agency investigations.

When the staff of ACICS, with delegated authority to do so, determines that a complaint or adverse information warrants investigation, it will notify the chief executive officer of the institution in writing about the complaint or adverse information, and a copy of the information will be provided. The institution is requested to submit to the Council office its version of the conditions or circumstances which led to the complaint or adverse information. The complainant also will be informed in writing that the institution has been contacted and has been requested to provide information. Any governmental agency providing adverse information to the Council may be informed at the discretion of the Council of the action taken on the adverse information.

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:

- (a) dismiss the complaint or terminate further investigation of the adverse information;
- (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
- (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:
 - (i) issued a compliance warning
 - (ii) directed to show cause why its accreditation should not be suspended, revoked, or otherwise conditioned;
 - (iii) directed to submit a report to ACICS detailing plans for rectifying the area(s) of noncompliance; or
 - (iv) directed to undergo a special on-site evaluation.

The Council will inform the complainant of the determination by the Council and the disposition of the complaint.

2-3-800 – SPECIAL AND FACT VISITS

The Council reserves the right to initiate special on-site evaluation visits to or request specific reports from an institution at any time, both of which are to be completed under conditions and within a time frame determined by ACICS. Refusal of an institution to respond to or cooperate with such requests shall be grounds for suspension of its grant of accreditation.

At any time ACICS has substantive evidence or information that an institution is in jeopardy of having its eligibility status with a federal or state agency or its accreditation status with another accrediting agency conditioned, ACICS may direct a special on-site evaluation visit to that institution. The purpose of the visit will be to ensure that the students in the institution are not being harmed educationally because of the institution's alleged noncompliance with federal or state statutes or regulations or another accrediting agency's standards and criteria.

The Council also may direct a Fast Assessment and Compliance Team (FACT) visit to investigate and report on alleged improper practices at ACICS institutions.

The Council retains discretion to determine the size and composition of special and FACT teams and the length and breadth of the evaluation. In making these decisions, the Council will consider the issues and factors that prompted the visit, the size of the institution, and the nature of the institution's offerings.

2-3-900 – DEBARMENT

The Council may bar a person or entity, including spouses and closely related family groups as defined in Section 2-2-401, from being an owner, senior administrator, or governing board member of an ACICS-accredited institution if that person or entity was found guilty of fraudulent or criminal behavior; was debarred by a government agency or an accrediting agency; or was an owner, senior administrator, or governing board member 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.

The Council will notify the person(s) or entity 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 person(s) or entity whom it intends to bar as the result of the closing of an institution within a reasonable period of time following the closure. In each case, the Council will forward an intent to bar notice by both electronic and certified 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 or entities will be considered notified when the Council has forwarded the intent to bar notice in accordance with these procedures.

The intent to bar notice will inform the person(s) or entity that they are entitled to present information and materials in writing to appeal the intent to bar at the next scheduled meeting of the Council. The notice will

stipulate that if they intend to appeal the intent to bar, the person(s) or entity must inform the Council office in writing within ten business days of receipt of the notice as to whether they will appeal the intent to bar in writing or in person, and an in-person hearing is subject to such fees as contained in the ACICS Schedule of Fees. The Council's decision is final if the person or entity elects not to appeal within ten business days of the Council notification.

A debarment order may be issued by the Council as a result of its consideration of the facts presented in the appeal. The Council's decision is final and will be sent to the person(s) or entity by electronic and certified mail following their appeal before the Council.

The Council retains final discretion to establish the terms and length of the debarment. The length of debarment will be for a period of at least three years; however, it may vary depending on the circumstances that led to the debarment decision. Individual circumstances may justify a longer period of debarment.

TITLE III EVALUATION STANDARDS

Chapter 1 General Standards Applicable to All Institutions

INTRODUCTION

This section of the *Accreditation Criteria* comprises the most heavily weighted part of the accrediting process. Chapter 1 states and explains the minimum operational and educational practices expected of all institutions, whatever methodology and mode of educational delivery is used and wherever the institution provides educational activities. Inasmuch as these are minimum expectations, extreme deviation from them is not permitted. The Council, while encouraging innovation at institutions and attempting to be somewhat flexible in its interpretation of these standards, does not grant waivers on criteria pertaining to good educational practice.

Chapters 2-6 contain additional criteria which are applicable to institutions offering nondegree programs and programs culminating in occupational associate's, academic associate's, bachelor's, and master's degrees. The Council recognizes that some requirements of these standards may not be appropriate for entities, and it may waive specific standards on a case-by-case basis.

3-1-100 – MISSION: PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

Every institution must have a mission which is its specific purpose for existing. The mission must include a mission statement and a set of objectives which together accomplish the purpose of the institution. The objectives should be devoted substantially to career-related education and should be reasonable for the program of instruction, mode of delivery, and facilities of the institution.

Institutions may exhibit a variety of missions, ranging from those which have a singleness of purpose to those which are multi-purpose.

3-1-101. *Disclosure.* The mission statement of the institution, its purpose, and its supporting objectives must be stated in the catalog and in other publications readily available to the public. The mission statement must be expressed in terms readily understandable by a prospective student, parents, the public, and other educational institutions.

3-1-102. *Implementation.* The institution is measured both in terms of its stated purpose and in terms of its conscientious endeavor to fulfill this purpose. The faculty, financial resources, physical plant, administration, management, and educational activities shall be appropriate and committed to successful implementation of the stated mission of the institution.

3-1-110 – CAMPUS EFFECTIVENESS

An important indication of the overall effectiveness of an ACICS-accredited institution is the degree to which it meets the mission, objectives, and educational goals it has identified. Each ACICS-accredited main and branch campus shall develop and implement a Campus Effectiveness Plan (CEP) that is consistent with its mission and objectives. The CEP shall identify how a campus plans to assess and continuously improve its overall educational operations and how it plans to meet the educational and occupational objectives of its programs, taking into consideration its review of all critical organizational functions such as admissions, recruitment, financial aid, and student services.

For the Campus Effectiveness Plan, the following elements, at a minimum, shall be evaluated and reported for achievement of outcomes, at both the campus and program levels:

1. retention rates;

2. placement rates;
3. graduation rates;
4. current student satisfaction;
5. graduate satisfaction;
6. employer satisfaction; and
7. student learning outcomes.

3-1-111. *Development of the Campus Effectiveness Plan.* The effectiveness plan for each campus shall be described in a written CEP document that complies with Appendix K, Requirements and Guidelines for the Campus Effectiveness Plan (CEP).

3-1-112. *Implementation and Monitoring of the Campus Effectiveness Plan.* Each campus shall establish a process for developing, reviewing, and monitoring the Campus Effectiveness Plan (CEP). Each campus shall document that progress reports, completed at least biannually, related to completion of activities and changes in data and information for each of the elements identified in the CEP are prepared.

3-1-113. *Evaluation of the Campus Effectiveness Plan.* Each campus shall evaluate the CEP, its goals, and the effectiveness of activities completed at least annually. The annual evaluation will involve comparison of outcomes with baseline rates and goals for each of the elements measured after completion of planned activities. Data for historical outcomes shall be maintained and included in the report to provide a basis for evaluating the achievement of goals for the various elements of operations and campus and program effectiveness over time.

3-1-200 – ORGANIZATION

Each institution should have an organizational structure designed to promote among all staff and faculty a spirit of understanding, cooperation, and responsibility. Performance standards and monitoring controls need to be employed to insure adequate administrative functioning. The annual budget expenditures should be adequate to properly carry out the stated educational objectives of the institution.

3-1-201. *Disclosure.* The governance, control, and corporate organization of the institution shall be stated in appropriate publications, including the catalog, together with the names of the trustees, directors, administrators, and officers.

3-1-202. *Institutional Integrity and Capability.* The integrity and capability of an institution is manifested by the professional competence, experience, personal responsibility, and ethical practices demonstrated by all individuals comprising the ownership, control, or management.

An institution must assume full responsibility for the actions, statements, and conduct of its representatives and must, therefore, select each of them with the utmost care, provide them with adequate training, and arrange for constant and proper supervision and evaluation of their work. The Council considers the following to be important:

- (a) Emphasis shall be placed upon the efficiency and effectiveness of the overall administration of the institution. Attention shall be given to educational activities, admissions, student financial aid, financial operations, plant and equipment, student services, and compliance with applicable local, state, and federal laws. The degree of institutional compliance with the criteria in these areas is a measure of the administrative capability of the chief on-site administrator of a main campus or branch campus.
- (b) The institution must maintain written evidence that faculty and staff members clearly understand their duties and responsibilities, know the person to whom they report, and understand the standards by which the success of their work is measured. A copy of the document describing these terms and conditions shall be given to the faculty and staff member and a copy maintained by the institution. The administration

must maintain documentation of the evaluation of the faculty and staff.

- (c) In the administrative organization of the institution, the professional integrity of the faculty and staff shall be respected. Administrative decisions shall not inhibit the academic freedom of the faculty. The institution shall adopt a policy assuring academic freedom and communicate the policy to all faculty.
- (d) An institution shall establish, publish, and implement appropriate grievance policies and procedures for considering complaints received from students, employees, and other interested parties. The grievance procedure for students shall be published in the institutional catalog or student handbook and shall include the name and address of ACICS.

3-1-203. *Data Integrity.* All data reported to ACICS for any purpose is expected to reflect an accurate and verifiable portrayal of institutional performance and is subject to review for integrity, accuracy, and completeness.

3-1-204. *Financial Stability.* The financial well-being of an institution requires constant oversight by competent managers.

The institution shall have adequate revenues and assets to meet its responsibilities, to ensure continuity of service, and to accomplish its mission. Budgetary practices should reflect a balanced application of resources to operations; the amount of expenses and debt must not burden the educational objectives of the institution; the proportion of the budget allocated to instructional programs must be adequate; and the financial profile of the institution must support the intent of its objectives.

3-1-300 – ADMINISTRATION

Each institution must coordinate its administrative functions to best serve its educational mission. All staff should be well trained to carry out administrative functions. Detailed recordkeeping enhances the management of the institution.

3-1-301. *Management.* Each institution shall have a chief executive officer. Moreover, each institution also shall have a qualified on-site administrator at the main campus and at all branches. This person must be made known to ACICS and shall be responsible for the implementation of the stated mission as determined by the institution's governing body. The staff continuously shall evaluate the programs of study, student activity program, guidance services, financial aid services, instructional procedures and resources, and other aspects of the educational program of the institution. The chief executive officer shall seek to improve the educational program as a result of such evaluation. A current copy of the *Accreditation Criteria* shall be maintained by each main and branch location and shall be available to faculty and staff.

3-1-302. *Evidence of Degrees.* Institutions listing degrees of staff members in the catalog shall have on file appropriate evidence of the degrees. Copies of either transcripts or diplomas are acceptable.

3-1-303. *Records.* Careful recordkeeping is crucial to the smooth day-to-day operation of an institution. The data from these records are important to the institution for future planning, to students for informational purposes, and to evaluation teams during school visits. All such records should be maintained at each institutional site or shall be available at each site during evaluation visits. The Council expects at least the following:

- (a) Adequate records shall be kept by each institution relative to administrative operations. These include financial aid activities, admissions, curriculum, accreditation and licensure, guidance, instructional resources, supplies and equipment, school plant, faculty and staff, student activities, and student personnel.
- (b) For all students admitted under an ability-to-benefit determination, the institution shall maintain records of the validated test scores, initial and periodic academic and career advising, and any other factors used by the institution to support its admissions determination.
- (c) For institutions admitting students under an ability-to-benefit determination, documentation shall be

maintained to evidence the relationship between test cut-off scores from one of the U.S. Department of Education Federal Student Aid approved admissions test and successful academic or employment outcomes.

Such records could include such data as admissions rate (acceptances versus rejections), completion rate of those enrolled, general placement rate, or specific career placement rate.

The test score should predict successful completion of the program. Institutions must develop longitudinal data comparing the test cut-off score(s) utilized for acceptance with the eventual success of students.

An institution admitting a high percentage of applicants based on testing and losing a comparably high percentage of those students before completion (even allowing for factors other than ability) may not be using the appropriate test to measure aptitude, or the cut-off score for admission is too low, or both. The use of the minimum cut-off scores determined by the U.S. Department of Education will not, in and of itself, satisfy the requirements of this section.

- (d) For high school graduates or those with high school equivalency, the institution shall have on file evidence that the student has received a high school diploma or its equivalent. The student's record also may include personal background information, evidence of other educational experiences (including certificates, diplomas, or degrees earned), or information about the ability of the student to benefit from the education offered, including any aptitude testing information or recommendations from other sources.
- (e) A permanent academic record (transcript) of the student's progress shall be maintained. Compatible with the institution's mission, the transcript shall indicate student accomplishment in terms of clock hours, units of credit, or some other recognized system. The grading system used shall be fully explained on the transcript and must be consistent with that appearing in the institutional catalog.
- (f) All records pertaining to students shall be safely protected. Records shall be stored consistently in a manner that provides protection against misuse, misplacement, damage, destruction, or theft. Acceptable methods of protecting records from theft, fire, water damage, or other possible loss include electronic records management systems and software appropriately fire-rated file cabinets (that can be and are locked when not being used); a central location such as a vault, the entirety of which is protected; and printout records or other hard copies of records protectively stored off the premises.
- (g) Certain records shall be maintained by the institution for a specified period of time. The institution shall adopt and publish a policy on the responsibility and authority of the institution to properly maintain and retain such records. At a minimum, the policy should address the following document retention requirements:
 - (i) Academic records shall be maintained permanently (see Glossary definition of Record, Permanent Academic);
 - (ii) Admissions and advisement records shall be kept for at least five years from graduation or the last date of attendance (see Glossary definition of Record, Admissions and Advisement); and
 - (iii) Financial aid records shall be maintained according to the record retention policies and guidelines established by the funding source (see Glossary definition of Record, Financial Aid).

The institution shall comply with its published policy on records maintenance and retention.

3-1-400 – RELATIONS WITH STUDENTS

Each institution should strive to ensure that its relations with students always reflect the highest ethical standards and conform to all applicable laws and regulations. Each institution also is required to develop a program of student services that is consistent with its stated mission, including services provided for students attending branch campuses and learning sites. Such services should support the educational program and reflect the institution's concern for the welfare of the student.

3-1-410 – ADMISSIONS AND RECRUITMENT

It is up to an institution to establish its own admissions criteria. It is the responsibility of ACICS to ensure that all who are enrolled are accorded equal educational opportunity.

The monitoring of the activities of an institution's employees, vendors, contractors, or agents in the referral, recruiting, evaluation, and admissions processes is the responsibility of the institution. The activities of these individuals must be supervised by the institution. An institution may not delegate these activities to anyone whose economic incentives are to recruit prospects through means that are unethical or subject to public criticism or to admit ill-prepared applicants. The institution may not contract, directly or indirectly, with third parties who are generally unfamiliar with the institution. "Non-employees" are independent contractors who are not considered "employees" under the Internal Revenue Code.

Institutions participating in Title IV programs must be aware of regulations imposed by the U.S. Department of Education as they apply to recruiting practices.

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

- (a) The requirements for students admitted to programs leading to a certificate, diploma, or degree shall include graduation from high school or its equivalent. Foreign transcripts of international students seeking admission must be evaluated by the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (AACRAO)'s International Education Services, or a member of Association of International Credential Evaluators (AICE), or a member of National Association of Credential Evaluation Services (NACES) to validate equivalency with graduation from high school and eligibility to enter college or university in the United States.

For students admitted under the ability-to-benefit classification, as specified under standard 3-1-303(b) and (c), students may only be admitted by passing an independently administered U.S. Department of Education approved ATB test.

- (b) It is the responsibility of the institution to maintain student records which reflect the requirements for admission of all students.
- (c) Institutions are not precluded from admitting, under different requirements, students who are beyond the age of compulsory school attendance or who may be otherwise specially circumstanced, such as:
 - (i) having financial sponsorship through contractual arrangements with public or private organizations;
 - (ii) having identifiable needs requiring remedial instruction as a supplement to the regular curricula;
 - (iii) participating in innovative postsecondary programs specially described to ACICS; or
 - (iv) being enrolled in individual courses not leading to an academic credential.

3-1-412. Recruitment. Recruiting shall be ethical and compatible with the educational objectives of the institution. The allocation of an institution's financial resources for purposes of recruitment shall be consistent with the stated mission of the institution. The following minimums apply:

- (a) An institution shall ensure that any person or entity engaged in admissions or recruitment activities on its behalf is communicating current and accurate information regarding courses and programs, student achievement disclosures (see Section 3-1-704), services, tuition, terms, and operating policies. The institution must maintain documentation that demonstrates that it systematically monitors its recruitment activities.
- (b) No prospective student names obtained as a result of a survey, canvass, promise of future employment or income while a student, or other marketing activity by an institution may be used for recruitment purposes unless the name of that institution is clearly identified and purposes of such activity are communicated to the respondent. This does not preclude the use of surveys or other studies to determine the employment needs and the educational desires of the local community.

- (c) An institution shall conform to the laws and regulations of each of the states in which it operates and shall ensure that each of its representatives is properly licensed or registered as required by the laws of that state.
- (d) Representatives of an institution shall use only those titles which accurately reflect their actual duties and responsibilities. Recruitment and enrollment personnel may not be designated as counselors or advisors and may not make final decisions regarding financial aid eligibility, packaging, awarding, and disbursement.
- (e) Referrals are permitted, and the referrer may be paid a fee so long as the referrer provides full disclosure and does not misrepresent the purposes of soliciting a prospective referral and such payments do not violate state or federal laws.
- (f) All recruiters must be supervised by the institution's administration to ensure that their activities are in compliance with all applicable standards.

3-1-413. *Transfer of Credit.* An institution shall evaluate and consider awarding proper academic credit for credits earned only at institutions that are either accredited by agencies recognized by the United States Department of Education or recognized by the respective government as institutions of higher education, for internationally-based institutions. The institution shall establish and adhere to a systematic method for evaluating and awarding academic credit for those courses that satisfy current program course requirements including an evaluation of all foreign transcripts by the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (AACRAO)'s International Education Services, or a member of Association of International Credential Evaluators (AICE), or a member of the National Association of Credential Evaluation Services (NACES), prior to the evaluation and award. Written policies and procedures must clearly outline the process by which transfer of academic credit is awarded. The institution shall disclose in its catalog 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 and if applicable, a list of institutions with which the institution has established articulation agreements.

In addition, the institution shall disclose in its catalog the transferability of the credits in the programs that are offered.

3-1-414. *Enrollment Agreements.* All institutions must use an enrollment agreement for each enrolled student which clearly outlines the financial obligations of both the institution and the student. The agreement must outline all program-related tuition and fees as well as the scheduled month and year of expected graduation, and must be signed by the student and the appropriate school representative, and a copy provided to the student.

3-1-420 – STANDARDS OF SATISFACTORY PROGRESS

Each institution shall establish and administer measures of satisfactory academic progress for all students as referenced in Appendix D.

3-1-421. *Compliance.* The institution complies with the requirements of Appendix D.

3-1-422. *Documenting Compliance.* The institution documents compliance with its Satisfactory Academic Progress policy.

3-1-423. *Oversight.* The institution encourages and assists students who are experiencing difficulty in progressing satisfactorily in their programs.

3-1-430 – TUITION AND FEES

3-1-431. *Institutionally Financed Grants, Scholarships and Loans.* The Council recognizes that most accredited institutions offer or administer grants, scholarships and loans for students. Institutions must meet appropriate

guidelines for such programs in order to ensure their legitimacy. Participation in ethical institutional grant (see Appendix E, Guidelines for Institutionally Funded Student Aid), institutional loan, and scholarship programs requires adherence to the following:

- (a) In addition to administering federal or state student aid programs, institutions may offer the following types of student financial aid:
 - (i) grants funded by the institution and awarded to all students within a qualifying category or to all students who demonstrate a need in accordance with published standards;
 - (ii) scholarships funded by the institution or a third-party and administered by the institution to provide aid to students who demonstrate academic achievement in accordance with published standards; and
 - (iii) loans funded by the institution and available equally to all students.
- (b) Institutionally financed or administered grants, scholarships and loans must be described in the current catalog with a description of the criteria for the award, the application procedures and deadlines, and amounts that may be awarded. All information must avoid false, misleading or exaggerated statements.
- (c) Institutionally financed loans may vary in amount depending on the student's need. The terms and conditions for loans, including forbearance and repayment, must be described in the current catalog. All institutionally financed loans must be collected in accordance with sound and aggressive business practices for the collection of student loans. Institutions must counsel students concerning their loan repayment obligations.

3-1-432. Tuition and Charges. Institutions may charge varying amounts of tuition and fees for different programs. All charges should be consistent for similarly circumstanced students enrolling at the same time and in the same programs, however, and detailed financial records should indicate at all times the financial obligation of the student to the institution. The following are minimum expectations:

- (a) The tuition and other charges, including the period for which the student is financially obligated, shall be clearly stated in the catalog of the institution. The existence of any separate or comparable publication containing tuition rates must be referenced specifically in the catalog. The schedule of charges must be uniformly administered to similarly circumstanced students.
- (b) The financial records of the students shall clearly show the charges and dates for the posting of tuition, fees, and other charges; the payments and dates of payment; and the balance after each transaction.
- (c) Announcements of changes in tuition or fees must state the effective date of the change and be uniformly administered.
- (d) Terms of payment may be varied by the institution so long as the tuition charges are uniformly administered.

3-1-433. Refund Policy. The institution must have a fair and equitable refund policy that is applicable to all students and that is published in the institution's catalog. Specific federal or state policies may apply.

3-1-434. Administration of Student Financial Aid. Participation in state or federal student financial aid programs requires serious administrative responsibility. The Council expects all institutions participating in such programs to be knowledgeable of and in compliance with applicable laws and regulations. The following requirements govern how such activities are evaluated by ACICS:

- (a) An institution participating in student financial aid programs shall designate at least one competent person at the site to administer student financial aid. The extent of this activity and the personnel needed shall be governed by the size and classification of the institution. The person who determines the amount of student awards cannot be responsible for disbursing those awards.
- (b) The person or persons assigned to administer student financial aid programs must in all cases be a part of the administration. Administrative personnel involved in student recruitment as their major activity shall

not have the final decision-making authority in the approval or awarding of student financial aid.

- (c) There shall be professional awareness on the part of the financial aid administrator as shown by membership and participation in state, regional, or national financial aid associations and by other educational activities designed to keep the administrator up to date on procedures and changes in the field.
- (d) Institutions shall document that students are counseled concerning their student loan repayment obligations.

3-1-435. Cash Discounts. Any institution providing discounts for cash received in advance of the normal payment schedule must have a written policy. That policy must be provided in writing to all student applicants prior to enrollment.

The institution must demonstrate that the policy:

- (a) is available to all students at the institution; and
- (b) bases the size of the discount on the financial benefit the institution receives from the payment of cash earlier than otherwise would be required under the institution's normal tuition payment schedule or applicable retail installment contract.

3-1-440 – STUDENT SERVICES

3-1-441. Advising. Each institution shall designate at least one person with experience to advise students on academic problems and employment opportunities. The extent of such activity, and the personnel assigned to it, shall be determined by the size, classification, and admissions standards of the institution, the characteristics and location of students, and the means of communication with them. Orientation activities shall assist new students in adapting to the institution. The following are minimum expectations:

- (a) A system of educational and occupational advising shall be available to students and shall be provided on a periodic basis to ability-to-benefit students enrolled pursuant to Section 3-1-303(b).
- (b) Institutions shall emphasize retention and program completion for all students through activities that take into account their academic and socioeconomic characteristics.
- (c) Institutions shall provide employment assistance and document activity. An institution shall not guarantee employment or the starting salary of its graduates. All institutions that use placement percentages or salary projections as part of their recruiting activities shall maintain data on all graduates, including the percentage receiving jobs and the percentage receiving jobs in the career field for which they were trained. Institutions also should keep data on students who do not graduate but who become employed on their own or with the institution's assistance.

An institution is encouraged to provide placement assistance, when requested, to graduates of other ACICS-accredited institutions who are relocating to a new community.

3-1-442. Extracurricular Activities. Institutions which sponsor or conduct programs of extracurricular activities shall base such programs on well-defined purposes. These programs shall be designed primarily to serve the educational needs of the students, and the institution shall provide guidance and supervision for them.

3-1-500 – EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES

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.

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 some of the most significant responsibilities of the administration. The faculty should actively participate in developing the total educational program of the institution.

3-1-501. *Faculty Involvement in Academic Governance.* 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:

- (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.

3-1-502. *Programs Requiring Certification or Licensure.* For institutions offering programs in which state certification, licensing, or registration is mandatory in order to become employed in a specific career field, curricula must contain the necessary course work to afford students the opportunity to obtain the minimum skills and competencies in order to become certified, licensed, or registered in that career field.

3-1-503. *Specialized/Programmatically Accredited Programs.* 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:

- (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 online 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.

The institution shall assess the curriculum and/or the need for specialized accreditation and update it as needed to reflect current requirements for employment.

3-1-504. *Education or Study Abroad Activities.* 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.

3-1-505. *Distance Education Review.* Each institution engaged in the distance education mode of delivery must meet the requirements of Appendix H.

3-1-506. *Occupational and Avocational Programs.* The evaluation of these programs, as defined in the Glossary, will be consistent with the guidelines of Appendix M.

3-1-510 – PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION, PLANNING, DEVELOPMENT, AND EVALUATION

3-1-511. *Program Administration.* The administration of the academic programs shall be assigned to individuals whose academic or experiential qualifications are related to the programs of study. The amount of time devoted to the administration of the program(s) must be commensurate with the size and scope of the institution and its program offerings.

Within the administrative structure of the institution, program administrators or department heads shall have

authority and responsibility for the development and administration of the programs and have adequate time and resources to fulfill these responsibilities.

3-1-512. Program Planning. Educational activities shall be consistent with the institution's mission and objectives. The credibility and integrity of an institution shall be reflected by the manner in which its mission and objectives correlate with the educational opportunities made available to students.

The Council recognizes the legitimacy of various modes of educational delivery. An institution using various modes of delivery should demonstrate overall effectiveness and quality consistent with the criteria (see Glossary definitions of Distance Learning and Independent Study; see also Appendix H, Principles and Guidelines for Nontraditional Education). The following standards apply:

- (a) The formation of policies and design of educational programs should involve students, graduates, administrators, faculty, and other interested parties such as advisory committees. This practice also should serve as an evaluation process to determine effectiveness and relevance when the institution relies upon curricula, courses, courseware, or coursework that is designed, leased, or owned by another entity or provided by or through a network of entities.
- (b) Flexibility in organization and administration shall be provided to serve varying groups and situations. Provisions shall be made for individual differences among students in the learning applications, learning environments, and modes of instructional delivery available to students.
- (c) The use of community resources shall be varied in each program and shall be utilized to enhance student enrichment and potential career opportunities. (See Glossary definition of Community Resources.)

3-1-513. Program Development. The educational programs shall evidence a well-organized sequence of appropriate subjects leading to an occupational objective, an academic credential, or both. The following apply:

- (a) The curricula shall be published in the institution's catalog and shall state objectives specific to each curriculum. Additionally, there shall be a detailed syllabus on file for each course in each curriculum that is made available to each student enrolled in the class. For independent study courses, institutions are required to develop a learning contract signed by the student and institution that outlines the course objectives and procedures unique to this form of instruction. For externships, institutions are required to develop a written and mutually signed agreement that outlines the arrangement between the institution and the site, including specific learning objectives, course requirements, and evaluation criteria. The Council's expectations for detailed syllabi, independent study, and externships are outlined in the Glossary.
- (b) The courses offered shall be available when needed by the student in the normal pursuit of a program of study. Prerequisites must be indicated. The prerequisite system must assure proper qualifications of students in any given class and provide an increasing level of difficulty as the student progresses.

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

3-1-514. Program Evaluation. The faculty shall participate in a systematic process of continuous curriculum evaluation and revision. Institutions are encouraged to consider curriculum changes designed to serve students' needs that may be determined by community surveys or other fact-finding procedures relating to educational or employer needs.

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

3-1-516. Course and Program Measurement. The Council recognizes that institutions must provide for their students a learning environment in which achievement is encouraged. It further recognizes the legitimacy of both traditional (e.g., lecture/laboratory/externship) and nontraditional (e.g., distance education or independent study) educational delivery methods. A framework for transfer of credit and consistent application of academic credit awards should apply to all of these varied forms of educational delivery.

Institutions, therefore, must demonstrate in written policies and procedures for determining credit hours a knowledge of appropriate academic course and program measurement and correct application of the measurement.

- (a) Credit in traditionally delivered programs measured in credit hours must be calculated based on one of the following attribution formulas:
 - (i) One quarter credit hour equals, at a minimum, 10 classroom hours of lecture, 20 hours of laboratory, and 30 hours of externship. The formula for calculating the number of quarter credit hours for each course is $(\text{hours of lecture}/10) + (\text{hours of lab}/20) + (\text{hours of externship}/30)$; or
 - (ii) One semester credit hour equals, at a minimum, 15 classroom hours of lecture, 30 hours of laboratory, and 45 hours of externship. The formula for calculating the number of semester credit hours for each course is $(\text{hours of lecture}/15) + (\text{hours of lab}/30) + (\text{hours of externship}/45)$.

The syllabus for each course must provide appropriate content and out-of-class learning activities to support the academic credit awarded for the course. Many courses are a combination of lecture, lab, and practicum. Therefore, the institution should be very careful in allocating the number of hours of each in a particular course.

A “clock (contact) hour” includes a minimum instructional time of 50 minutes of supervised or directed instruction and appropriate break(s). Therefore, when calculating conversions from clock to credit hours or allocating credit for courses, institutions must take great care to ensure that scheduled breaks are educationally appropriate. Long periods of instruction with unusually short or no breaks are not acceptable. The institution has the burden of convincing the Council that the breaks are sufficiently long and frequent for the program being taught. Thus, it is rare for an institution to be able to divide by 50 in calculating the credit-hour equivalent of contact hours; usually, the denominator should be 60 or something between 50 and 60.

- (b) Credit award rationales for nontraditional delivery of courses or programs (e.g., distance education or independent study) generally do not use the above lecture/laboratory/practicum formulas for credit calculation. The rationale used must be submitted to the Council for pre-approval of the credit calculation. As a part of the approval application, an institution must demonstrate that the clock or credit hours awarded are appropriate for the degrees and credentials offered using a thoroughly developed rationale. The institution may accomplish this by demonstrating that students completing these programs or courses have acquired equivalent levels of knowledge, skills, or competencies to those acquired in traditional formats.

Courses offered in nontraditional formats must be structured to ensure that students have sufficient opportunity for preparation, reflection, and analysis concerning learned subject matter. Institutions should be aware that federal law requires a minimum number of weeks per academic year for Title IV eligibility purposes. The U.S. Department of Education uses eligibility criteria and definitions for Title IV disbursements that may be different from those in the *Accreditation Criteria*.

- (c) Institutions may award academic credit to students who demonstrate competency in a subject area based on their academic, occupational, or personal experiences. The following expectations apply:
 - (i) Institutions shall establish and adhere to a systematic method for evaluating and awarding academic credit for those experiences (e.g., experiential learning, advanced academic standing, credit by examination) that satisfy current program course requirements.
 - (ii) Institutions must maintain documentation to support that credit hours awarded are appropriate based on the assessment of the knowledge, skills, or competencies acquired.

3-1-517. Course Scheduling. Courses must be scheduled in such a way as to be educationally appropriate for the academic background of the students served, the type of the coursework involved, and the method of educational delivery. The Council will review the number of minutes of instruction provided, the appropriateness of the length of the breaks between classes, the number of classroom hours per week, the expectation of outside preparation, and the educational needs of the students.

3-1-520 – CREDENTIALS CONFERRED

3-1-521. Conferring of Credentials. The conferring of certificates, diplomas, or degrees by an institution shall be consistent with its mission and objectives and in compliance with applicable state laws.

3-1-530 – INSTRUCTION

3-1-531. Instructional Tools. Institutions shall:

- (a) provide appropriate facilities, instructional equipment, resources, support for modes of instructional delivery, and personnel;
- (b) ensure academic freedom and other conditions favorable for effective classroom instruction;
- (c) ensure that the quantity and type of instructional material and equipment is proportionate to the size of the institution and the nature of the program; and
- (d) comply with applicable copyright laws in the use of instructional materials.

3-1-532. Instructional Components. Required instructional components shall include the following:

- (a) systematic planning;
- (b) well-defined instructional objectives;
- (c) the selection and use of appropriate learning materials;
- (d) appropriate modes of instructional delivery;
- (e) the use of appropriate assessment strategies; and
- (f) the use of appropriate experiences.

3-1-540 – FACULTY

3-1-541. Faculty Preparation. Preparation of faculty members shall be academically and experientially appropriate to the subject matter they teach. Faculty members shall be competent to teach the subject matter offered and shall have reasonable latitude in their choice of teaching methods.

U.S. based institutions must provide evidence that all faculty members are graduates of institutions accredited by agencies recognized by the United States Department of Education. Credentials of faculty who are graduates from institutions outside the United States must be evaluated by the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (AACRAO)'s International Education Services, or a member of Association of International Credential Evaluators (AICE), or a member of the National Association of Credential Evaluation Services (NACES), to determine the equivalency of the credentials awarded by institutions in the United States.

Internationally based institutions must provide evidence that all faculty members are graduates of institutions recognized by their respective governments as institutions of higher education or be evaluated by the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (AACRAO)'s International Education Services, or a member of Association of International Credential Evaluators (AICE), or a member of the National Association of Credential Evaluation Services (NACES), to determine the equivalency of the credentials 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.

3-1-542. *Verification of Credentials.* Institutions must maintain official transcripts for credentials that qualify faculty members to teach their assigned courses and for those credentials that are listed in the catalog. All these credentials shall be on file in the administrative offices at the campus location nearest to where the faculty member is primarily employed. An official transcript is one sent from the registrar's office at the institution where study was completed directly to an employing institution or downloaded electronically from a link provided to the employing institution from the institution where study was completed. Transcripts received electronically must bear an indication that it is an "official transcript" and the link provided must have information on how to verify the authenticity of the transcript. A transcript bearing the notation "issued to student" is not an official transcript for employment purposes.

3-1-543. *Faculty Development.* Institutions are required to establish faculty development plans including both in-service and professional growth activities to enhance faculty expertise. There shall be documented evidence on an annual basis of these development plans and their implementation. For those faculty who are trained in teaching methodology on the postsecondary level and who possess limited related outside employment, the plan should concentrate on content update, e.g., new software, equipment, techniques, etc. Institutions are responsible for demonstrating that these plans are appropriate given each faculty members' training, education, and related work experience and that they provide the proper mix of in-service training and professional growth based on the academic and experiential background of the faculty. (See Glossary definitions of In-Service Training, Professional Growth, and Faculty Development.)

3-1-544. *Faculty Meetings.* Regularly scheduled faculty meetings or department meetings, with participation by full-time and part-time faculty, shall be held. Discussions and attendance shall be recorded.

3-1-600 – EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES

Each institution must provide an environment that is conducive to good instruction and learning and that supports the educational programs offered by the institution. The adequacy of the environment is assessed against the demands made upon it by the curricula, faculty, and students.

3-1-601. *Plant and Equipment.* The buildings, classrooms, equipment, furniture, grounds, instructional tools, support systems, instructional facilities, machinery, and other physical requirements of the educational program shall be appropriate and shall contribute to the achievement of the institution's objectives. Equipment, instructional tools, and machinery must be properly installed and maintained.

3-1-602. *Code Requirements.* The plant shall meet the general tests of safety, usefulness, cleanliness, maintenance, health, lighting, and compliance with any local or state laws governing physical facilities, particularly with respect to fire, safety, and sanitation.

3-1-700 – PUBLICATIONS

It is important for institutions to recognize the value of "truth in advertising" when promoting their operations. Publications must be prepared and presented in a professional manner to reflect favorably upon the institution. Information published must be accurate and factual and reflect the current status of the institution. Only the Council can accept or reject an institution's catalog, and a final decision will not be made based on a draft.

3-1-701. *Catalog.* Each institution shall publish and provide to each enrolled student a catalog which complies with Appendix C, Institutional Publications Requirements.

3-1-702. *Multiple-School Catalog.* All institutions utilizing a common catalog must be of common ownership. Photographs of the physical facilities of any of the institutions must be captioned to identify the particular institution or campus depicted. The faculty and staff of each institution and the members of the general administration exercising supervisory responsibility for the group of institutions must be clearly identified with

respect to each institution and the overall administration. Any information contained in the catalog that is not common to all institutions in the group should be presented in such a manner that no confusion, misunderstanding, or misrepresentation is possible. (For further information, see Appendix C.)

3-1-703. Advertising. Literature used by an institution must be presented in such a manner as to be factual with respect to services offered or benefits promised. An English translation for advertising that is in a language other than English must be available. (For further information, see Appendix C.)

If an institution publicly discloses incorrect or misleading information about its accredited status, the contents of an evaluation team report, or accreditation actions with respect to the institution, the institution must make a public disclosure of correction through the same media or means.

3-1-704. Performance Information. Each campus shall routinely provide reliable information to the public on its performance, including student achievement information, that includes, at a minimum, retention, placement, and licensure examination pass rates (where applicable). The information provided shall be for the entire campus and for each program as reported to ACICS in its most recent Campus Accountability Report.

3-1-800 – LIBRARY RESOURCES AND SERVICES

The adequate provision of library resources and information services, appropriate to the academic level and scope of an institution's programs, is essential to teaching and learning. It is incumbent upon all member institutions to assess the level of library resources needed in relation to their programs and to provide a range of support to meet these needs. The size of collections and the budget allowed for library resources and services do not ensure adequacy. The quality, relevance, accessibility, availability, and provision of support services ultimately will determine the adequacy of an institution's efforts. In assessing library resources and services, ACICS requires that an institution, at a minimum, shall:

- (a) develop an adequate core of library resources to support academic success and to meet instruction and research needs as appropriate;
- (b) ensure up-to-date means to access these resources;
- (c) develop a continuous assessment strategy for library resources and information services that includes staff and faculty;
- (d) provide adequate staff to support assessment, library development, collection, organization, and accessibility;
- (e) ensure that library services are provided to all learners, including those at nonmain campuses and those online;
- (f) provide training and encouragement for students and faculty to utilize library resources as an integral part of the learning process and as lifelong learners; and
- (g) those campuses that have a residential component, must provide students a physical space on site or within close proximity to the institution in order to allow for access to library resources and services.

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.* 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.

3-2-102. *Field Preparation.* Assignments requiring more than three preparations in different fields (e.g., allied health, business, criminal justice) shall not be given to an instructor at any given time.

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 applied general education and other academic courses. 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.
- (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 be consistent with the institutional mission and include current print or digital titles, periodicals, professional journals, and/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 print, digital, or online reference works appropriate to the curriculum. Major consideration will be given to the diversity of the collection including books, periodicals, online resources and information technology readily available to students and faculty; their currency; appropriateness; and relevance to the programs offered by the institution.

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 may be centralized and shall be sufficient to meet the needs and fulfill objectives of the institution's programs.

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 their 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 their 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. Any specializations within a program shall be a minimum of 9 semester hours, 13.5 quarter hours, or their equivalent, and shall not be considered part of the concentration coursework. The catalog must identify the courses that satisfy the general education and specialization 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, curricula, 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 an associate's, bachelor's, master's, and/or doctoral 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. 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.

3-3-304. 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, may be centralized, 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 mission and 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 day, evening, and online 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 and/or wireless access 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 physical and/or online 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.

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 their 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 their 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. Any specializations within a program shall be a minimum of 12 semester hours, 18 quarter hours, or their equivalent, and shall not be considered part of the concentration coursework. 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, specialization(s), 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, curricula, 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 JD or MD, 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, one 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 the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (AACRAO)'s International Education Services, or a member of Association of International Credential Evaluators (AICE), or a member of 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 annual 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 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 online and computer-based library 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, may be centralized, 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 mission and 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 day, evening, and online programs. If online or computer-based resources are utilized on site, a sufficient number of terminals and/or wireless access 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.

3-4-405. 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 that support all of the course 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.

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. Any specializations within a program shall be a minimum of 12 semester hours, 18 quarter hours, or their equivalent, and shall not be considered part of the concentration coursework. 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, specialization(s), 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, Institutional Publications Requirements. 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, curricula, 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 JD or MD, 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, one 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 the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (AACRAO)'s International Education Services, or a member of Association of International Credential Evaluators (AICE), or a member of 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 annual 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 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 online and computer-based library 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, may be centralized, 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 mission and 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 day, evening, and online programs. If online or computer-based resources are utilized on site, a sufficient number of terminals and/or wireless access 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 that support all of the course 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 coursework plus a thesis at the graduate level; or 36 semester hours, 54 quarter hours, or their equivalent of coursework at the graduate level if a thesis is not required. Any specializations within a program shall be a minimum of 12 semester hours, 18 quarter hours, or their equivalent, in addition to the required coursework, and shall not be considered part of the required coursework. The master's degree normally is earned over three semesters, five quarters, or their 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, curricula, 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 such cases, admission may be granted only to eligible students who have completed, at a minimum, an associate's degree or equivalent. If the institution chooses to award a suitable baccalaureate degree upon completion of

specified requirements or concurrently with the award of the professional master's degree, the baccalaureate degree curriculum must be approved by the Council.

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 coursework 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 an M.L.S. degree or the equivalent, or, for foreign institutions, one 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 the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (AACRAO)'s International Education Services, or a member of Association of International Credential Evaluators (AICE), or a member of 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 annual 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 physical, computer based, digital, and online 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, may be centralized, 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 mission and 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. Students should discover information in a variety of formats with an appropriately supporting information technology infrastructure.

These resources shall include bibliographic and monographic references, major professional journals and reference services, research and methodology materials, and 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 enhance the effectiveness of the educational programs.

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 day, evening, and online programs. If online or computer-based resources are utilized on site, a sufficient number of terminals and/or wireless access 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; and shall be capable of supporting an understanding of the methods and principles of scholarly research and how to use information ethically 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.

GLOSSARY

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.

A

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

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 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.

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.

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.

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.

Avocational Short-term Courses/Programs. Courses or programs that are less than 300 contact hours and do not lead to an academic credential; rather, they are for preparation, enhancement, or continuing education.

B

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.

C

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 also 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. A variety of individuals, organizations, or businesses that provide information, guidance, or support to a specific program of study or career opportunity, such as professional and trade associations, employers, and guest speakers.

Competency-based Program. 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. (See also Direct Assessment Competency-based Programs.)

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 coursework. 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.)

D

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 Doctoral.** The degree signifying completion of the advanced academic requirements for practice of a profession. A professional doctoral degree is most commonly a practitioner-based degree beyond the master's degree level (i.e., JD, Ed.D., DFA, DBA, etc. but excluding 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 coursework.
- 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.** The use of tools or instruments which provide for the direct examination or observation of student knowledge or skills against measurable learning outcome. Techniques which measure what students know and/or can do and provide strong evidence of student learning. 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.
- 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.

E

- 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.** Employer satisfaction and the level of satisfaction are defined by the campus based upon information collected, typically via a survey, on a regular basis from employers who have hired graduates of programs offered by the campus. Satisfaction questions should cover different aspects of career preparation in general (such as professionalism and 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 to perform tasks which utilize such skills.
- 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 practical experience, under the supervision of a qualified faculty member, 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. 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.

F

- 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 curricula leading to an associate's degree, etc.

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

G

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. Graduate satisfaction and the level of satisfaction are defined by the campus based upon information collected on a regular basis from students who have graduated from the programs offered by the campus. Recommended information includes the results of surveys of all graduates who left the institution at least 30 days prior to being contacted. Satisfaction questions should cover different aspects of the program and the campus as well as overall satisfaction of the graduate with the preparation provided by the campus for the position.

H

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.

I

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.

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.

Indirect Assessment. Tools or instruments which provide for an evaluation of attitudes and/or inferences of whether student learning has occurred. Examples of indirect measures are as follows: 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.)

Information Technology. Method or modes of delivering training, education, or research information via current or new telecommunications 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, Multiple-Campus. An institution that provides educational programs at one main campus and one or more branch campuses. (See Section 1-3-202.)

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

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.

L

Laboratory. A learning environment where students apply knowledge or instruction to enhance skills and solve problems. Normally, two hours of work in a laboratory environment, under the supervision of an instructor, 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 learning environment 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 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 freshman- and sophomore-level students. Lower-division courses usually carry course numbers in the 100-299 or 1000-2999 range.

M

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

N

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.

O

Occupational Short-term Programs. Programs that are less than 300 contact hours and lead to an academic credential and/or licensure.

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

Outcomes, Campus. The intended result or end result of an activity or process in the assessment of effectiveness. In determining effectiveness, campuses are required to evaluate the following outcomes: placement rates; retention rates; licensure examination pass rates (where applicable); employer satisfaction; graduate satisfaction; student satisfaction, and other student learning outcomes. Campuses also may use additional outcomes in evaluating effectiveness.

P

Placement. Working in the field of study or acquiring a credential that directly benefits the graduate's existing employment.

Placement Rate. The Placement Rate is defined by ACICS in terms of the total number of completers and graduates minus those who are not placed (employed), divided by the total number of completers and graduates, and expressed as a percent. 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 placed adjustments, and exclusions for students not available for placement.

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.)

R

Record, Admissions and Advisement. Official documents of admissions data and academic advising. Such documents include but are not limited to applications for admission or readmission (for matriculants), admissions letters, denial and waitlist notifications, aptitude/assessment test scores, military records, degree audit records, transfer credit evaluations, transcripts reflecting degrees earned from other institutions, and academic advising correspondence.

Record, Financial Aid. Official documents regarding any grant, scholarship, or loan offered to assist the student in meeting college expenses. Documentation may vary depending upon the funding source (e.g. state or federal programs, high schools, foundations, or corporations).

Record, Permanent Academic. Official document of the student's scholastic progress. Such documents include, but are not limited to, official transcripts; final grade reports detailing each course code, course title, and final grades for a given year and term; and any documented change to final grades.

Record, Student. A record (electronic or hard-copy) which is comprised of, at a minimum, a student's admissions and advisement, permanent academic, and financial aid records.-

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 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.

S

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

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, and 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.

Specialization. In a degree program, a collection of courses apart from the *Area of Concentration* that provides students with in-depth knowledge in a given area of expertise leading to potential career opportunities within that specified field of study.

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

Student Learning Outcomes, Assessment of. The measurement 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. Student learning outcomes are expressed as measurable knowledge, skills, abilities or attitudes. (For more information, also see *Direct Assessment and Indirect Assessment of Learning Outcomes*).

Student Satisfaction. Student satisfaction and the level of satisfaction are defined by the campus based upon information collected, typically via a survey, on a regular basis from students who are currently enrolled at the campus. Satisfaction questions should cover different aspects of the current program of study and the services provided by the campus to prepare the student for the workforce.

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.

T

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 curricula, two-year institutions also may offer other types of instruction, e.g., courses in general education and adult education, short courses, and special lectures.

U

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

V

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 postsecondary education.

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

W

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)**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ARTICLE I: General Provisions and Definitions	89
<i>Section 1 – Name</i>	89
<i>Section 2 – Board of Directors</i>	89
<i>Section 3 – Council</i>	89
<i>Section 4 – Recognition</i>	89
<i>Section 5 – Directors</i>	89
<i>Section 6 – Commissioners</i>	89
<i>Section 7 – Public Representatives</i>	89
<i>Section 8 – Membership</i>	89
<i>Section 9 – Offices</i>	89
<i>Section 10 – President</i>	89
ARTICLE II: Board of Directors	89
<i>Section 1 – Composition</i>	89
<i>Section 2 – Powers and Duties</i>	89
<i>Section 3 – Officers of the Board and Officers of the Council</i>	90
(a) <i>Chair</i>	90
(b) <i>Vice Chair</i>	90
(c) <i>Secretary</i>	90
(d) <i>Treasurer</i>	90
(e) <i>Additional Officers</i>	90
(f) <i>Terms</i>	90
ARTICLE III: Council	91
<i>Section 1 – Composition</i>	91
<i>Section 2 – Powers and Duties</i>	91
ARTICLE IV: Terms, Vacancies, Removal, Resignations, and Compensation	91
<i>Section 1 – Assumption of Office</i>	91
<i>Section 2 – Terms</i>	91
<i>Section 3 – Vacancies</i>	92
<i>Section 4 – Resignations</i>	92
<i>Section 5 – Removal</i>	92
<i>Section 6 – Compensation</i>	92
ARTICLE V: Committees	92
<i>Section 1 – Standing Committees of the Council</i>	92
(a) <i>Nominating Committee</i>	92
(b) <i>Business Practices Committee</i>	93
(c) <i>Education Enhancement and Evaluation Committee</i>	93
(d) <i>Financial Review Committee</i>	93
(e) <i>Institutional Effectiveness Committee</i>	93
<i>Section 2 – Standing Committees of the Board of Directors</i>	93
(a) <i>Executive Committee</i>	93
(b) <i>Audit Committee</i>	93
(c) <i>Investment Committee</i>	93

(d) <i>Governance Committee</i>	94
(e) <i>Ethics Review Committee</i>	94
Section 3 – <i>Other Committees</i>	94
ARTICLE VI: <i>Membership, Fees, and Meetings</i>	94
Section 1 – <i>Gaining Membership</i>	94
Section 2 – <i>Loss of Membership</i>	94
Section 3 – <i>Types of Fees</i>	94
Section 4 – <i>Change in Fees</i>	94
Section 5 – <i>Conditions of Payment</i>	94
Section 6 – <i>Proration of Fees</i>	94
Section 7 – <i>Other Costs</i>	95
Section 8 – <i>Assessments</i>	95
Section 9 – <i>Annual Meeting</i>	95
Section 10 – <i>Special Meetings</i>	95
Section 11 – <i>Notice of Meetings</i>	95
Section 12 – <i>Quorum</i>	95
Section 13 – <i>Meetings of the Council</i>	95
ARTICLE VII: <i>Appeals Process</i>	95
Section 1 – <i>Review Board for Appeals</i>	95
Section 2 – <i>Due Process</i>	96
ARTICLE VIII: <i>Miscellaneous</i>	96
Section 1 – <i>Liability</i>	96
Section 2 – <i>Corporate Seal</i>	96
Section 3 – <i>Checks, Notes, and Contracts</i>	96
Section 4 – <i>Books and Records</i>	96
Section 5 – <i>Confidentiality</i>	96
Section 6 – <i>Indemnification and Insurance</i>	96
Section 7 – <i>Amendments</i>	96
Section 8 – <i>Dissolution</i>	96
Section 9 – <i>Fiscal Year</i>	97
Section 10 – <i>Limitation of Liability</i>	97
ARTICLE IX: <i>Litigation, Jurisdiction and Venue, and Expenses</i>	97
Section 1 – <i>Suits Against ACICS, Jurisdiction, and Exhaustion</i>	97
Section 2 – <i>Reimbursement of ACICS's Litigation Expenses</i>	97
Section 3 – <i>Other Expenses</i>	97
Section 4 – <i>Binding Effect</i>	97

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 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 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 trade association or membership organization related to, affiliated with, or associated with the agency; 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, branches, 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, 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.