Case Name: *In the Matter of* Accrediting Council for Independent Colleges and Schools
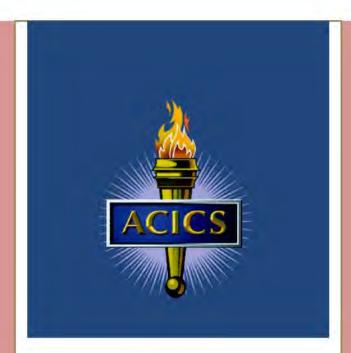
Docket No.: 16-44-O

Filing Party: Respondent, Accrediting Council for Independent Colleges and Schools

Exhibit No.: B-O-75

VISIT EVALUATION PROCEDURES AND GUIDELINES

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

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EVALUATOR SELECTION CRITERIA

The evaluator role within the accreditation process is crucial. ACICS evaluators are valued and recognized for the contributions they make to the peer review process.

Evaluators are classified as either **member** or **public**. Those affiliated with an ACICS-accredited institution are referred to as member evaluators and those not affiliated with an ACICS-accredited institution are referred to as public evaluators. Further, they are **academic, administrative**, or **neither**. An "academic" representative is defined as someone currently or recently directly engaged in a significant manner in postsecondary teaching and/or research. The "administrative" representative is defined as someone currently or recently directly engaged in a significant manner in postsecondary programmatic administration. Further, *recently* is being interpreted as having applicable experience within the last five years.

In addition to program specialists, full team visits (renewals of accreditation, initial grants, and Quality Assurance Monitoring - Branch) will include evaluators with expertise in student relations (SR), and educational activities (ED), and may also include distance education (DE).

ELIGIBILITY

To serve as an evaluator, an applicant must have documented, at least five years of experience and/or education in a specialty area or expertise. In addition, the following requirements must be met as evidenced by information provided on the resume:

a. Member evaluators must have experience in at least two areas of operation including instruction, admissions, financial aid, placement, and administration.

b. Student relations (SR) expertise requires experience calculating satisfactory academic progress (SAP) and familiarity with the preparation of the Campus Accountability Report (CAR).

c. Educational activities (ED) expertise requires five years of experience at an administrative level and experience reviewing credentials of faculty assigned to teach general education courses.

d. Distance education (DE) expertise requires experience in the management, instructing and curriculum development of distance education programs as well as evidence of training.

CONTINUED PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

It is critical that evaluators maintain currency in their fields of expertise in order to best serve ACICS and its membership. This is especially important for public evaluators, those who have retired from the field, and those that are experts in programs which require currency in licensure, certification, and registration.

Evaluators vetted in a field for which you are licensed/certified, and federal or state laws require renewal of said licensure/ certification, proof of currency as well as evidence of continued education must be submitted to evaluatormanager@acics.org, at least on an annual basis.

Public and/or retired evaluators are expected to participate in professional development to evidence currency in the field. Documentation of completion should be submitted to evaluatormanager@acics.org, at least on an annual basis.

CANONS OF ETHICAL RESPONSIBILITY
FOR ACICS EVALUATORS

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

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

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

2. An evaluator shall avoid impropriety and the appearance of impropriety while conducting all activities, including the accepting or offering of any gifts of material value.

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

4. An evaluator shall preserve the confidentiality of the institutional information to which he/she is privy. This includes sharing information with an outside consulting agency.

5. An evaluator shall, while representing ACICS, subscribe to the ACICS policy on Discrimination and Harassment during any and all interactions with the ACICS staff, other members of evaluation teams, or any person affiliated with an institution being evaluated. An evaluator shall have read the ACICS Policy on Discrimination and Harassment and will report to the ACICS President any action perceived to be discriminatory or harassing.

6. An evaluator shall refrain from any inappropriate business activity, in fact or appearance, relative to accreditation responsibilities related to serving on any evaluation team at any institution accredited by ACICS.

7. An evaluator shall not solicit any consulting requests from an institution for which he/she has served as a team member for a period of at least three years following the visit, regardless of his/her status as an evaluator. Active solicitation during an on-site review will result in immediate suspension of active service as an evaluator.

8. An evaluator shall notify ACICS if he/she accepts any contractual agreements, involving compensation, from any ACICS-accredited institutions in order to prospectively remove themselves from any ACICS activities relative to that institution.

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

ACICS POLICY ON DISCRIMINATION AND HARASSMENT

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

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

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

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

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

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

TYPES OF EVALUATION VISITS

Initial Grant

An initial evaluation visit is the first full opportunity for the Council to receive information about an institution interested in accreditation. Many initial applicants will have a small number of students with financial support coming primarily from community agencies and contracts with business and industry. An institution undergoing an initial evaluation visit usually does not have the authority to participate in federal financial aid programs. Some initial applicants may be currently accredited by another agency. A few are also multi-campus institutions, including a number of learning sites. The maximum grant of initial accreditation is three years for unaccredited institutions and four years for those currently in good standing with another accreditor.

Renewal of Accreditation

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

Quality Assurance Monitoring - Branch

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

Quality Assurance Monitoring – Out of Scope

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

Quality Assurance Monitoring - Readiness

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

Quality Assurance Monitoring – Higher Credential

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

Quality Assurance Monitoring - Change of Ownership or Control

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

Quality Assurance Monitoring – Distance Education

A one day visit is conducted within 1 year of approval to offer distance education. These visits are usually conducted by one team member, accompanied by an ACICS staff member, and are normally one day in length.

Special

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

Unannounced/Limited Announced

Unannounced and limited announced visits are conducted to address specific areas as identified by the Council and to assess the institution's overall compliance with the *Accreditation Criteria*. These visits are conducted by an ACICS staff member, but may also include one-two team members, and are normally one day in length.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

CHAIR RESPONSIBILITIES

The chair and the ACICS staff representative ("staff") shall organize and conduct a meeting of the team (see Pre-visit Team Meeting) prior to the visit to review the self-study and Update Report, the purpose of the visit, the role of each team member, the role of the staff, and the assignment of responsibilities during the visit. Given the value of a collaborative dynamic between the staff and chair, a brief meeting should be held prior to the full team meeting.

The chair and the staff shall maintain regular communication with the campus's chief on-site administrator throughout the evaluation process regarding any areas of concern or potential findings. As appropriate, the chair and staff shall give the campus's chief on-site administrator the opportunity to respond to the areas discussed. Further, the chief on-site administrator is to be informed of all findings prior to the exit conference. Recognizing the value of those campuses with corporate support, it is acceptable for such representation to observe the briefings and provide information if requested. However, they should not be present during the interviewing of the administrator and should not be the primary interface with the team.

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

TEAM MEMBER RESPONSIBILITIES

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

Each program offered by a campus must be evaluated by a subject specialist. Ordinarily, each new program being offered by the campus will be reviewed by an individual with the required expertise and if possible, program reviews will be combined for efficiency. The evaluator will be accompanied by staff that will coordinate the visit and assist the team member as described above. The report will be read and discussed by the team prior to departure. If the visit is not conducted in conjunction with a full team visit, the staff member is responsible for conducting the exit conference and preparing the final report using the appropriate report outline (Quality Assurance Monitoring - Distance Education, New Program, Readiness, and/or Credential Inclusion). During a reevaluation visit, a subject specialist(s) will be invited to serve on the team for each specialized program. The Staff member will determine if it is necessary for the new program specialist to serve for the entire length of the evaluation visit or simply for the one-day program review

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

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

PREVISIT TEAM MEETING

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

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

2.   Purpose of the visit and review of the application, Update Report, and campus/institution history.

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

4.   Evaluator expense and reimbursement procedures, if necessary.

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

6.   Evaluation visit time schedule, using the class schedule information provided to the chair during their pre-visit communication.

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

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

9.   Format and structure of the exit session.

REPORT WRITING EXPECTATIONS

The report writing and preparation guidelines are provided at the end of this manual.

1.   The team report templates, as revised and published on the ACICS web site, must be used to complete the individual sections. The final narrative report prepared by the chair will remove any non-applicable questions.

2.   Reports must be completed electronically (see use of computers below).

3.   All questions must be answered in complete sentences. Answers to several related questions may be combined into one paragraph. Single-sentence paragraphs should be avoided.

4.   Evaluators must complete their assigned report sections prior to the completion of the visit and provide both a hard copy and electronic version to the team chair and staff coordinator.

5.   Programs within the same field should be evaluated on one report with separations on details completed as appropriated or as directed by the team leadership.

6.   Information collected and recorded on reports cannot be shared with any party and a copy of said report should be maintained until the Council takes an action on the campus's application.

USE OF COMPUTERS ON VISITS

Reports must be typed while the team is onsite because the report sections must be turned in to the team chair and ACICS staff prior to the conclusion of the visit. When utilizing computers, team members should be mindful of the following:

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

2. The chair is responsible for the final report, including formatting and editing all sections. During the visit, time should be spent creating complete sentences and making sure all necessary information is included. The sample report **(Appendix A)** should be used as a guide.

3. Since the campus is responsible for providing printing capabilities, the reports should be printed but also shared electronically with the team leadership (chair and staff coordinator) – via email or flash drive.

4. The ACICS representative will bring a laptop on the visit and the campus will be asked to have computers and printers available for the team. However, team members should also travel with their personal laptops for convenience.

FINAL REPORT

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

The chair will edit the draft of the team report and submit the final copy to the Council office via the email account, visitreports@acics.org. The edited report must be submitted within 5 days of the team's review. Following an extensive editorial process, a copy of the report is then forwarded to the institution for its written response.

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

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

After preparing the team report on the computer, please submit to the Council office via email, retaining copies for your files.

TRAVEL AND HOTEL ARRANGEMENTS

Team members are responsible for making their own transportation arrangements using the ACICS Concur System. Team members should not schedule return transportation that would require them to leave the campus premises before 5:00 p.m. on the last day of the visit unless advised otherwise. Rental cars should not be secured by individual team members unless approved in advance by the ACICS staff representative. Hotel reservations will be made by and paid for by the staff representative. For convenience, all team members will stay at the same hotel. The staff representative will notify each team member of the name and address of the hotel. Changes made to hotel reservations by team members may create a rate change. Any rate increases due to change made by team members will be the responsibility of the team members, including reimbursable room charges which include room service, internet, and dry cleaning (for visits longer than 3 days).

REIMBURSEMENT INFORMATION

Please refer to Appendix B: Evaluator Reimbursement Policy and Procedures for additional details on the expectations for reimbursement submission. Team members will be reimbursed for all appropriate expenses, including travel (personal mileage), lodging, meals, and other expenses supported by original receipts. Using the Concur link via their individual evaluator account, each team member will complete at least two expense reports for each visit project – one for the airfare/train using the ACICS BTA account and another for all out of pocket expenses, including honorarium. Requests for reimbursement must be submitted within 60 days of the evaluation visit; requests submitted after that date will not be honored. **Receipts should not be paper-clipped or stapled to the reimbursement form but should be taped to a fullsheet of paper to ensure that they are not lost during the reimbursement process at the Council office.**

An honorarium of $350 per actual visit day is paid to the chair of the evaluation team.
An honorarium of $250 per actual visit day is paid to non-chair evaluators for participating as a team member.

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

Payment for honoraria and reimbursement of expenses will be paid by the Council upon completion of the visit and receipt of reimbursement request forms with receipts documenting expenses incurred. All requests for reimbursement are to be sent to the Council office in Washington, D.C., not to the institution visited. Payment should normally be sent within 15 business days of the date the request form is received in the ACICS office, assuming the request is for only approved expenses and appropriate documentation/receipts are included.

Evaluators are protected from individual lawsuits through the Council professional liability insurance coverage.

ACICS CONCUR TRAVEL SYSTEM

The Concur Travel and Expense System must be used by all evaluators to make and manage their travel arrangement for ACICS purposes. The training material, as published at http://www.acics.org/evaluators/content.aspx?id=2292 , should be reviewed prior to using the system. The expectations are summarized below:

1.   Flight Arrangements: Changing or Canceling:

    If the trip cannot be completed, for whatever reason, ACICS (staff coordinator) **MUST be notified immediately.**
    The unused ticket will be the property of ACICS and cannot be used by the evaluator for personal travel. This will constitute a hreach of the Canons of Ethical Behavior and subject to negative action.

2.   Flight Assistance

    Phone: 866-738-6444
    Direct Contact: Scot Bower

3.   Flight Expensing

    An expense report **must** be submitted just for the flight for reconciliation purposes. The report and a copy of the eticket must also be mailed to the ACICS office. **Expense reports can he automatically created directly from the Upcoming Trip section of your profile.**

4.   Other Expenses

    Out of Pocket expenses must be submitted on a new report as per the normal process – **Payment Type should be changed.**

EVALUATOR

REIMBU RSEMEN T POLICY

A reimbursement policy has always been in place to monitor and guide evaluators on ACICS' expectations on the submission process. Significant revisions have been made and should be reviewed at the end of this document (Appendix B). Worthy of note are the following:

- Only alcohol consumed only at dinner, maximum of 2, will be reimbursed.

- Additional tipping (double tipping) and tips above 20% will not be reimbursed.

- Written approval from the staff coordinator is needed, and should be submitted with the expense reports, for the following: airfare in excess of $1000; additional hotel nights; and car rental.

- For meal and beverage purchases only which are under $10, a receipt is no longer necessary. However, an explanation for the expense must include the purpose of the expense, the amount and date.

EVALUATION VISIT MEETING ROOM MATERIALS

FULL TEAMS (RA, IG, AND QAM-BRANCH)

Institutions are to place the following materials in the room provided to the evaluation team. Additional materials may be requested when the team is at the institution.

1. Current Information

    a. Class schedule including course names, numbers, titles, room numbers, class times, names of instructors, and student enrollment by class period for the entire term/quarter/semester/module.
    b. Student enrollment on day(s) of visit by program and by day and evening divisions. c. Floor plan of facility.
    d. Staff roster and organization chart.
    e. Course syllabi for currently offered courses (For courses not offered in the current term, the syllabi must be provided with the exception of the following items: instructional materials and references, out-of-class activities and assignments, assessment criteria, and method of evaluating students).
    f. All admissions tests and test cut-off scores for each program.
    g. If ability-to-benefit students are admitted, complete documentation evidencing the relationship between admissions test cut-off scores and successful academic or employment outcomes, as well as the contract for the independent test administrator.
    h. Two copies of the most recently completed, and the prior year's ACICS Campus Accountability Reports along with the complete back-up documentation. This must include information to support enrollment, graduate, and withdrawal numbers and placement information such as student name, program of study, graduation date, job title, employer name, and employer telephone numbers.
    i. A copy of the current Campus Effectiveness Plan along with the progress reports and/or prior year's campus effectiveness plan.
    j. Board of directors and administrative staff meeting minutes.
    k. Faculty meeting minutes.
    l. Documentation of in-service training sessions held and the schedule for upcoming session.
    m. Schedule and documentation of community resources utilized for each program (organized by program).
    n. A copy of the Certificate of Attendance at an ACICS Accreditation Workshop for the chief on- site administrator or self-study coordinator.
    o. Copies of correspondence with ACICS for any approvals or notifications for modifications since the last Renewal of Accreditation Visit (learning sites, new programs, distance education activity, substantive/nonsubstantive changes to an existing program, change of location, change of name, etc.).
    p. A copy of the approved and most current Academic Analysis for each program. If applicable, this includes approved Clock to Credit Profiles with corresponding letters of approval.

2. Official Documents

    a. Corporate Charter.

b.   Articles of Incorporation, and Certificate of Incorporation or other appropriate documentation of legal structure and ownership of the institution and a chart outlining the ownership structure.

c.   Certificate of good standing; relative to an institution's corporate statute and/or legal identity

d.   State license and authorization to award degrees (if applicable).

e.   Correspondence with state regulatory agencies and accrediting agencies other than ACICS, if any

f.   Most recent state and VA compliance reports.

g.   Documentation that the facilities are in compliance with local, state, and federal laws governing fire, safety, and sanitation.

h.   Documentation that the institution is in compliance with copyright laws for instructional materials utilized.

i.   U.S. Department of Education Program Participation Agreement and Eligibility and Certification Approval Report (if applicable).

j.   Reports from most recent reviews by agencies such as the U.S. Department of Education, Inspector General, and guarantee agency, as well as the institution's student financial aid compliance audit.

k.   Third-party contracts with other educational institutions or contracts such as JTPA.

3.   Files

a.   Administrative staff personnel files that include updated ACICS data sheets.

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

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

4.   Inventories

a.   Library resonrce and reference materials including online materials (if applicable).

b.   Instructional equipment for all programs.

5.   Publications

a.   Most recent ACICS self-study application.

b.   All current advertising and promotional literature, including scripts, copies of newspapers, magazines, brochures, and tapes of radio and television ads.

c.   All current internal recruitment materials including admissions orientation packets, YTD admissions meeting minutes, copy of standard interview and phone scripts, and communication with external recruiters (if applicable).

d.   Student, faculty, and staff handbooks (if applicable).

e.   Current catalog with all addenda (if applicable).

f.   Previous two years catalogs and addenda (if applicable).

QUALITY ASSURANCE MONITORING – OUT OF SCOPE, HIGHER CREDENTIAL & DISTANCE EDUCATION

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

1. Current information

   a. Class schedule including conrse names, numbers, titles, room numbers, class times, names of instructors, and student enrollment by class period for the entire term/quarter/semester/module.
   b. Student enrollment on day(s) of visit by program and by day and evening divisions. c. Floor plan of facility.
   d. Staff roster and organizational chart.
   e. Course syllabi for currently offered courses for the program(s) being reviewed (For courses not offered in the current term, the syllabi must be provided with the exception of the following items: instructional materials and references, out-of-class activities and assignments, assessment criteria, and method of evaluating students).
   f. A copy of the most recently completed ACICS Campus Accountability Reports along with the complete back-up documentation. A copy of the most recently completed, and the prior year's ACICS Campus Accountability Reports along with the complete back-up documentation.
   g. A copy of the current Campus Effectiveness Plan.
   h. Faculty meeting minutes.
   i. Documentation of in-service training sessions held and the schedule for upcoming sessions.
   j. Schedule and documentation of community resources utilized for each program (organized by program).
   k. A copy of the approved and most current Academic Analysis for each program. If applicable, this includes approved Clock to Credit Profiles with corresponding letters of approval.

2. Official documents

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

3. Files

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

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

4. Inventories

   a. Library resource and reference materials including online materials (if applicable).
   b. Instructional equipment.

5. Publications

   a. New Program/Distance Education Application for the program(s) being reviewed.
   b. Transitional Plan for a higher credential (*only applicable for Higher Credential visit*)
   c. All current advertising and promotional literature, including scripts, copies of newspapers, magazines, brochures, and tapes of radio and television ads.

d. Student, faculty, and staff handbooks (if applicable).
e. Current catalog with all addenda (if applicable) and previous two years catalogs and addenda (if applicable).

QUALITY ASSURANCE MONITORING - READINESS VISIT

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

1. Current information

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

2. Official documents

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

3. Files

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

4. Inventories

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

5. Publications

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

QUALITY ASSURANCE MONITORING - CHANGE OF OWNERSHIP/CONTROL

Institutions are to place the following materials in the room provided to the evaluation team. Additional materials may be requested when the team is at the institution.

1. Current information

    a. Class schedule including course names, numbers, titles, room numbers, class times, names of instructors,   and student enrollment by class period.
    b. Student enrollment on day(s) of visit by program and by day and evening divisions (if different than enrollment reported in the Update Report).
    c. Floor plan of facility.
    d. Comparative organization chart (before and after change of ownership).
    e. A copy of the current Campus Effectiveness Plan (CEP) along with the prior year's CEP (should be prior to change of ownership).
    f. Faculty meeting minutes.
    g. A copy of the Certificate of Attendance at an ACICS Accreditation Workshop for the chief on- site administrator and owner(s) or completion of registration of an Accreditation Workshop for these individuals. [If individual(s) have attended a previous ACICS Accreditation Workshop while affiliated with this institution, a copy of that certificate may be provided in lien of a certificate following the change of ownership.]
    h. Copies of correspondence with ACICS for any approvals or notifications for modifications since the Change of Ownership (learning sites, new programs, distance education activity, substantive/nonsubstantive changes to an existing program, change of location, change of name, etc.).

2. Official documents

    a. New state license and/or authorization to award degrees issued after change of ownership or control.
    b. Correspondence with the U.S. Department of Education regarding the reinstatement of the institution's Title IV eligibility by way of a Program   Participation Agreement   and   Eligibility   and Certification Approval Report (if applicable).
    c. Correspondence from ACICS granting temporary reinstatement of your institution's current grant of accreditation.

3. Files

    a. Administrative staff personnel files that include updated ACICS data sheets.
    b. Faculty academic files that include updated ACICS data sheets, position descriptions, copies of evaluations, and faculty development plans.
    c. Faculty and Staff summary sheets.

4. Inventories

    a. Library resource and reference materials including online materials (if applicable).
    b. Comparative list of instructional equipment for all programs (before and after change of ownership).

5. Publications

a. Change of Ownership Application.
b. All current advertising and promotional literature, including scripts, copies of newspapers, magazines, brochures, and tapes of radio and television ads.
c. Student, faculty, and staff handbooks (if applicable).
d. A copy of the current catalog with all addenda (if applicable) and a copy of the catalog prior to Change of Ownership.

A TYPICAL EVALUATION VISIT

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

I. Tour Physical Facilities

a. Classrooms (take an approximate student attendance count)
b. Lounges (student, faculty, visitors, etc.)
c. Resource center or library
d. Administrative and academic offices
e. Housing, if applicable

II. Meet with the Campus Administrator

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

III. Begin Review by Team Members (individually and collectively)

a. Appropriate staff are interviewed based on areas assigned in the evaluation report
b. All team members should interview students
c. Team members will meet on a periodic basis as directed by the chair to share results of interviews and review of materials
d. Student Surveys will be administered and results generated as part of the reporting process

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

IV. Read Team Report as a Group

a. Discuss and agree on content of report
b. Identify team findings that will require additional information from the campus
c. List any recommendations to be included as an addendum to the evaluation report (if applicable)

V. Conduct Exit Conference with Team and Institutional Representatives
a. Team chair thanks school personnel

b. Team chair summarizes the findings identified by the team that would require a response
c. Staff representative explains the next steps in the evaluation process
d. Evaluation formally ends

GUIDELINES FOR TEAM ACTIVITIES

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

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

TEAM CHAIR

1. Interview Chief On-Site Administrator
A. Mission
    1. What is it
    2. How is it achieved
    3. Describe Campus Effectiveness Plan (CEP) and its relationship to the mission

B. Campus Effectiveness Plan (on-site administrator or coordinator)
    1. How was the plan developed
    2. Discussion on specific areas
    3. Who is responsible for the implementation and monitoring
    4. Progress reporting/review
    5. Evidence of evaluation
    6. Review of surveys and other supporting materials

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

2. Review and Evaluate

A. Faculty and administrative staff records
    1. Job descriptions
    2. Official college transcripts
        a. Look for seal; not stamped "Issued to Student"
        b. Make sure there is a transcript for each degree listed

        c.   Determine if degree is appropriate; review grades received in related subjects

        d.   If degree is out of field, verify minimum of two years' work experience in fields

3.   Application for employment
4.   Faculty development plan
5.   In-service training

6.   Professional growth
7.   Employee contracts, if applicable
8.   Evaluations

3.   Educational Facilities

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

STUDENT RELATIONS SPECIALIST

The extensiveness of the expectations of the SR review process is thoroughly detailed in the ACICS Student Relations Training Manual which will be provided to each approved evaluator. Below is a general outline of the onsite interview/review process.

1.   Interview Admissions Director and Representatives (as a separate group)
- Institution's admission standards
- Determination of leads and subsequent procedures
- Procedures for admission (testing, orientation, etc.)
- Type of student being recruited--recent graduate, adult, veteran, non-high school graduate, contract
- Control executed over admission representatives
- Responsibility for advertising (check materials published; for more information, refer to Appendix C of the *Accreditation Criteria*)
- Evaluation of performance
- Understanding of chain of command
- Frequency of staff meetings and topics discussed
- Testing procedures for ability-to-benefit vs. high school graduates/GED; who administers test
- Who is responsible for determining test cut-off scores for admission
- Observe at least one person designated to engage in recruitment activities conduct an initial phone screen and/or briefly observe an in-person interview with a prospective student.

2.   Interview Financial Aid Director and Officers (separately)
- Describe financial aid programs in which institution participates (Federal and state programs)
- Describe institutional grant or loan programs
- Describe any scholarship programs offered by the institution (check to see if all the details are accurately described in the catalog and research past recipients)

- Ask to see student financial records (e.g., ledger cards) and explanation of accounting methods
- Percentage of total enrollment receiving financial aid
- How are standards of satisfactory progress monitored
- Describe the communication between the education and financial aid departments concerning satisfactory progress
- Review standards of satisfactory progress as stated in the catalog
- Explanation of refund policy and procedures (check actnal withdrawals to be randomly selected by team member)
- Describe defanlt management procednres
- Education/experience of financial aid director
- Evaluation of performance
- Involvement in admission process
- Understanding of chain of command
- Frequency of staff meetings and topics discussed

3. Evaluation and Review of Financial Aid Procedures
   - Review of Enrollment Agreements, Ledger Cards and R2T4 forms
   - Review of administrative procedures for determining eligibility, packaging, awarding, and disbursement.
   - Review of initial and ongoing training and supervision for all financial aid personnel.
   - Review of financial aid activities.

4. Evaluation and Review of Recruitment Procedures
   - Review of initial and ongoing training and supervision for all recruitment personnel (internal and external).
   - Review of recruitment activities.
   - Interviews with students regarding their recruitment experience.

5. Interview individual(s) responsible for administration/monitoring of Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP)
   - Where is the policy published in the catalog?
   - Explain the policy
   - Documentation of implementation (student file review)
   - Evidence of evaluation
   - Evidence of providing assistance to students (advising)

6. Interview Placement/Career Director
   - Describe placement activities
   - Placement follow-up studies – documentation reviewed
   - Evaluation of performance
   - Understanding of chain of command
   - Frequency of staff meetings and topics discussed

EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES SPECIALIST

1. Interview the director of education/dean/academic affairs
   A. Discussion of qualifications and experience
   B. Academic oversight and resources
   C. Academic freedom policy
   D. Academic Governance
   E. Program for dealing with individual (academic) differences among students

F. Process for the evaluation and revision of curriculum and the involvement of faculty

G. (If applicable) Discussion on systematic process for the awarding of credit for experience (occupational or professional). Documentation to evidence consistency in award.

2. Review of General Education Faculty (Occupation – bachelor's degrees)

   A. Evidence of bachelor's degree and appropriate coursework (applied general education)

   B. Evidence of graduate degree and the equivalent of 18 semester hours in the teaching area C. Review coursework determined to be applicable to teaching area

3. Review of all faculty academic file (with assistance from staff coordinator)

   A. ACICS Data Sheet (current; not required)

   B. Official transcripts for all qualifying credentials
      1. College seal or evidence of authenticity (for those microfilmed)
      2. Not "issued to student"

   C. Faculty Development Plans
      1. In-service training (schedule)
      2. Professional growth activities
      3. Documentation of implementation

   D. Position Descriptions or Employment Contracts

   E. Evaluations by administration (student evaluations are recommended but not required)

   F. Percentage of faculty members holding requisite academic credentials as specified (credential specific)

4. Placement Verification in programs which hold specialized accreditation
5. Review of Instructional tools for general education (if applicable)
6. Review of contracts and/or agreements with other institutions or entities (if applicable)
7. Review of curricula and general education coursework (if applicable)

   A. Inclusion of minimum number of general education credits (credential specific)

   B. Inclusion of required distribution of general education disciplines C. General Education

   meeting standards (glossary definition of disciplines)

DISTANCE EDUCATION SPECIALIST

1. Interview the individual assigned to provide administration of the activity
   A. Discussion of qualifications and experience
   B. Oversight and resources C. Distance Education Plan
   D. Academic Governance
   E. Program for dealing with individual (academic) differences among students

2. Review of the Distance Education Plan
   A. Inclusion of components
   B. Integration into CEP
   C. Review coursework determined to be applicable to teaching area

3. Review Distance Education faculty academic files (with assistance from ED/staff coordinator)
   A. ACICS Data Sheet (current; not required)

B. Official transcripts for all qualifying credentials
  1. College seal or evidence of authenticity (for those microfilmed)
  2. Not "issued to student"
C. Faculty Development Plans
  1. In-service training (schedule)
  2. Professional growth activities
  3. Documentation of implementation
D. Position Descriptions or Employment Contracts
E. Evaluations by administration (student evaluations are recommended but not required)
F. Percentage of faculty members holding requisite academic credentials as specified (credential specific)

4. Review of, and interaction with, online platform (admin log-in should be provided)
   A. Curriculums
   B. Syllabi
   C. Faculty/Student interaction and Student/Student interactions

5. Review of Publication (Catalog)
   A. Admissions policy
   B. Confirmation of student identity
   C. Disclosure of distance education activity

6. Review of contracts and/or agreements with other institutions or entities (if applicable)

PROGRAM SPECIALIST

1. Review, Observe and Evaluate
   A. Classrooms
     - What teaching methods are used?
     - Are teaching methods employed effective and appropriate for the subject matter?
     - Is the course being taught as outlined in the syllabus?
     - How is the rapport between the instructor and the student?
     - Do students participate in class, e.g., questions, note taking, presentations
     - • How is instructional equipment utilized?
     - Are facilities adequate for type of class and number of students?

   B. Program Faculty
     - Qualifications – academic and experiential (documentation required) • Professional development/currency

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

   D. Instructional Equipment
     - In working order
     - Up to date
     - Sufficient quantity for present enrollment
     - Applicable to courses offered

- Usage
- Leased or owned; maintenance
- Distributed or centrally located
- Appropriate software licensure, as applicable

D. Publications
   - Review program-specific content to include admissions criteria, curriculum, course descriptions, etc. - Comparison with information in syllabi

E. Syllabi

F. Evaluation of Out of Classwork for Purposes of Credit awarded for Financial Aid
   - Review the campus's written procedures (as evidenced by their academic credit analysis) to determine compliance with the written policy and definition of a credit hour as defined by the U.S. Department of Education for Title IV funding.
   - Review evidence that out-of-class work or the equivalency is being evaluated.

2. Interview Students
   Interviews should take place on all visits. See Interviewing Students section.

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

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

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

   D. Educational program
      1. Program objectives
      2. Program requirements for graduation; does student know when s/he will complete program
      3. Are students familiar with the sequencing and scheduling of courses
      4. Size of largest, smallest, and average class
      5. Preparation of instructors
      6. Are instructors available for additional help
      7. Do students evaluate faculty

8. Is there ample time for practice on equipment (e.g., computer, medical, electronic) and is it in good working order?
9. Are textbooks received in a timely manner?
10. Resource center/library
11. Counseling and guidance
12. Is there a feeling of freedom to discuss problems (e.g., academic, financial, personal) with administration and faculty?
13. Awareness of school policy regarding academic or attendance problems

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

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

G. Use of community resources
1. Guest lecturers
2. Field trips
3. Externships/internships

H. Instructional evaluation
1. Who does the evaluation (director, dean, students, etc.)?
2. How are evaluations performed?
3. Who discusses results? How is it documented?

I. Use of the resource center/library

J. Describe best and worst features of working conditions

K. Recommendations for improvement

GENERAL INTERVIEWING GUIDELINES

FACULTY MEETINGS

Faculty can be interviewed in groups (by department and overall) and probably some individually. General faculty meetings will be led by the educational activities specialist with support from the program specialists.

A. Educational/experiential background

B. Faculty Development Plan
1. How is plan developed? How is it implemented?

2.　How is it documented?　When is it reviewed?

C. Professional organization memberships
　　　1.　Amount of participation
　　　2.　Does institution contribute towards membership fees?

D. Faculty meetings
　　　1.　How often
　　　2.　Topics

E. In-service training
　　　1.　How often
　　　2.　Topics
　　　3.　Do you find them helpful?

F. Involvement in curriculum revision, materials selection, and faculty governance generally
　　　　1. How are faculty involved in curriculum review and development? Do you participate?
2. Are you able to make suggestions and recommendations for books and such? (*do you feel campus administration listens? values faculty input?*)
　　　3. Does your job description identify faculty participation in governance as a duty?

G. Teaching load
　　　1.　Number of clock hours per week in class
　　　2.　Average student-teacher ratio
　　　3.　Number and identification of subject preparations

H. Student attendance
　　　1.　Are you required to take attendance? Who do you give your attendance info?
　　　2.　Is there an administrative policy of excessive absenteeism? If so, what is it?

I. Availability to provide academic assistance outside of class time

J. Preparation, utilization, and evaluation of course syllabi--are they given to students

K. Selection of textbooks and supplementary

L. Use of community resources: any or all of the following?
　　　1.　Guest lecturers
　　　2.　Field Trips
　　　3.　Externships/internships
　　　4.　Other

M. 　　　Instructional evaluation
　　　1.　Who does them (e.g., director, director of education, students?)
　　　2.　How is evaluation performed? Are results discussed with you? Who does that?

N. Use of the resource center/library – do you give assignments requiring students to use LRC

O. Describe best and worst features of working conditions – Recommendations for improvement

STUDENT INTERVIEWS

If class is a mixed group, the evaluator may want to quickly ask students to **identify which program** they are enrolled in – you may ask them to say **when they started** & **when they plan to finish.** *These questions are suggested as a guide and not a script.*

1. How did you hear about the school? (*move on after you get some info about this*)
   - Why did you decide to enroll here? (*same as above, move on after a few responses*)

2. Admissions:
   - Did you complete an "application"?
   - Did you sign an enrollment agreement? (*and get a copy?*)

3. Catalog
   - Did you get a copy? When?
   - Have you been able to find info you need in it?   - Does it accurately portray things? ..... so far?

4. Orientation program:
   - Do you remember **who** did it? **When** was it done for you? **Helpful?**

5. Tuition and financial arrangements:
   - Was financial aid explained OK? How's it going? (*need to be careful here – don't get trapped into a griping session*)

6. Educational program
   - Do you know the objectives of your program? (*what do you expect to do when you finish*)
   - Do you generally know the requirements for graduation? (*for example, what are some of the courses you have to complete?*)
   - Do you have a "plan" for finishing? (*i.e., keep track of courses finished, courses need to take yet, etc.)*

7. Class sizes
   - Generally, how many students in the classes you take?
   - What kind are generally the largest? the smallest?

8. Instructors: How would you rate them, generally, on
   - preparation for class? knowledge about subjects they teach?
   - being willing to help you when you need it?
   - Do you know when they are available to help outside of class time?
   - Do you complete faculty and/or course evaluations?

9. Syllabus
   - Do you get a copy in all of your classes? at the start of the term?
   - Do you feel the syllabi are helpful? easy to figure out and use?
   - Do syllabi clearly give info on how your course grade will be figured?

10. Textbooks & instructional materials – are they appropriate? current? helpful to you?

11. How about equipment?
    - For classes or in programs where needed
    - Is the equipment available when needed? Kept in good repair? Generally up-to-date?

12. Library / LRC:

- Do you **use it**? For **what**?
- Are you **required to use it** for some assignments?

13. "Opinions":
    a. What's **best** about the school?
    b. What would you **change**?
    c. Would **you recommend a friend or family member come here**?

EVALUATION REPORT GUIDELINES

Accreditation has two fundamental purposes: to assure the quality of the institution and to promote the improvement of the institution. As members of the evaluation team, you have helped the Council and the institution to realize the first of these purposes through your report. It is imperative to be aware that the product of the team visit is the compiled team report. The report is an official document and should be considered as such during the visit, writing, and editing process as such. The report must provide an accurate summary of the campuses administrative and academic operations. The report must also provide a thorough and detailed summary when the team finds that the campus is not meeting any requirements of the Accreditation Criteria. Please note that all sections correspond directly to the Evaluation Standards listed in Title III, the Appendices, and the Glossary of the ACICS Accreditation Criteria.

To assist the institution in achieving the second purpose of accreditation— that of improvement beyond its compliance with the standards necessary for accreditation—members of the team are invited and encouraged to use this opportunity to suggest any practices, policies, or procedures which might improve the institution's educational and administrative quality. Your recommendations are for the benefit of the institution and will be shared only with the institution. They will not enter into any considerations of the Council regarding the accreditation status of the institution. A recommendation section is included at the end of each report. However, there is a clear distinction between a finding and a recommendation: a finding indicates there is a deficiency that needs to be addressed that affects educational or administrative activities; a recommendation is not a needed change (since the institution can ignore it) and is for institutional enhancement.

The templates are revised, as needed prior, to each travel cycle. Additionally, there are a number of resources available to assist in writing the team report. The most recent report templates and writing guides should be downloaded from the ACICS web site: Home > Evaluators > Evaluator Resources > Report Templates

The writing guidelines and samples are on the Web site for currency and accuracy.