

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)**

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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.

ARTICLE III

Council

Section 1–Composition. The Council shall consist of commissioners representing member institutions; commissioners-at-large, and public representatives. It shall be comprised of no more than fifteen (15) commissioners and it shall include at least two academic representatives and at least two administrative representatives. Academic representative is defined as someone currently or recently directly engaged in a significant manner in postsecondary teaching and/or research. Administrative representative is defined as someone currently or recently directly engaged in a significant manner in postsecondary institutional or programmatic administration. At least forty (40) percent of the commissioners shall be public representatives.

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

- (a) promulgate standards of accreditation and establish eligibility conditions, policies, and procedures for accreditation;
- (b) take final action on initial grants of accreditation;
- (c) take final action on denial, suspension, and withdrawal motions;
- (d) provide mechanisms for appeals and dispute resolution to ensure due process in resolution of conflicts between members and the Council;
- (e) provide to members appropriate accreditation-related services such as consultation, accreditation process workshops, and training opportunities for evaluators;
- (f) disseminate information on standards, procedures, and activities;
- (g) monitor compliance with the standards;
- (h) receive and act on other applications;
- (i) issue show-cause directives;
- (j) serve as liaison to recognition agencies or bodies;
- (k) issue a list of accredited colleges, schools, and organizations;
- (l) assess and collect fees from members;
- (m) take final action on the strategic plan; and
- (n) exercise other powers and duties incidental to the foregoing.

ARTICLE IV

Terms, Vacancies, Removal, Resignations, and Compensation

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

Section 2–Terms. The term of service as a commissioner shall be five years. A person appointed to fill a term of less than two and one-half years is entitled to apply for appointment to a full term. Upon completion of a commissioner’s term, the commissioner shall not be eligible to serve another full term until three (3) years have elapsed. However, a commissioner appointment to complete a vacated term, in full or part, is not subject to the three-year (3) waiting period. If nominated, public representatives may serve one additional appointment without the three-year (3) waiting period.

Section 3–Vacancies. Where a vacancy exists, the Nominating Committee shall review and make recommendations to the Council for its consideration.

Section 4–Resignations. Resignation from service as a commissioner and Director may be voluntarily tendered at any time. The resignation becomes effective upon receipt of written notice by the Chair of the Board and Council or the President. Automatic tendering of resignation is required under the following circumstances or conditions:

- (a) change of control or ownership at the institution with which affiliated;
- (b) change in employment status (other than internal); and
- (c) the commissioner is employed by an institution that is deemed to be under sustained and serious scrutiny regarding noncompliance with ACICS standards and requirements; or
- (d) adverse information resulting from an investigation of the institution, agency, or company with which affiliated by federal, state, or regulatory agencies.

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

Section 5–Removal. A commissioner may also be removed by not less than a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Council for breach of any code, canon, or tenet of ethics formally adopted pursuant to these Bylaws. Automatic removal is required under the following circumstances or conditions:

- (a) denial, suspension, or involuntary revocation of accreditation at the institution with which affiliated;
- (b) cessation or announced cessation of operations at such institution;
- (c) filing for reorganization or bankruptcy by such institution or its parent corporation;
- (d) debarment by the U.S. Department of Education from employment at any institution participating in federal student funding programs; or
- (e) indictment for a criminal offense.

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

Section 5–Removal. A commissioner may also be removed by not less than a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Council for breach of any code, canon, or tenet of ethics formally adopted pursuant to these Bylaws.

Section 6–Compensation. Commissioners shall serve without compensation. Public representatives shall receive honoraria for service in such amounts as the Board shall fix. Commissioners, as well as members of committees, if so provided in advance, shall be reimbursed for expenses incurred in performance of authorized duties.

ARTICLE V

Committees

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

- (a) *Nominating Committee.* The Nominating Committee shall be responsible for the screening of nominees and the selection of candidates for election as commissioners. It also shall identify persons qualified to be appointed as commissioners and recommend them to the Council for appointment. The Nominating Committee shall seek to maintain a Council that is generally representative of the types of member institutions.

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

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

- (a) *Executive Committee.* The Executive Committee shall consist of the Chair of the Board of Directors, who shall serve as Chair of the Executive Committee; the Chair Elect of the Board, who shall serve as Chair of the Executive Committee in the absence of the Chair of the Board; the Secretary; the Treasurer; and additional Directors as the Chair deems necessary, which are elected annually by majority vote of the Board. The Executive Committee acts on behalf of the Board and/or Council during the periods between Board and Council meetings. Accurate minutes of each Executive Committee meeting shall be maintained and shall be provided to the Board of Directors and/or Council at the next subsequent meeting of the Board of Directors or the Council. The Executive Committee's responsibilities shall be: between meetings of the Board and/or Council, act on issues requiring the timely attention of the Board or Council and assume such other duties as the Board of Directors or Council may from time to time delegate to the Executive Committee.
- (b) *Audit Committee.* The Audit Committee shall consist of a minimum of three members of the Board, including the Treasurer, as well as such other members as the Chair appoints. The committee shall work with the President to ensure an annual certified audit of the organization's financial activities is completed, that the findings of the audit are reviewed, and that actions are taken to address recommendations and areas of concern identified as part of the audit process.
- (c) *Investment Committee.* The Investment Committee shall consist of the President, a minimum of three

other members of the Board, including the Treasurer, and such other members as the Chair appoints. The Investment Committee shall work with the President to provide oversight of ACICS's investment funds. The Investment Committee shall select investment advisors, develop an investment plan, and review investment reports at least annually.

- (d) *Governance Committee.* The Governance Committee shall consist of commissioners appointed by the Chair of the Council and Board. The mission of the committee is to ensure that ACICS operates within the construct of the Bylaws. The committee will evaluate and make recommendations for modifications to the Bylaws in response to proposed changes in standards or operational policies at ACICS.
- (e) *Ethics Review Committee.* The Ethics Review Committee shall consist of four individuals selected by ACICS consisting of two independent, public members, one member affiliated with an ACICS institution, and one current Director. The Committee shall meet at least annually to allow for continuous evaluation of the ethical practices that govern the Council, staff, and its institutions. In addition, the committee shall meet on and as-needed basis to review perceived or actual ethical violations of Directors and provide recommendations for resolution.

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

ARTICLE VI

Membership, Fees, and Meetings

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

Section 2–Loss of Membership. Any member that ceases to be accredited by ACICS shall automatically, and without the necessity for further action, be deemed to be removed from membership. Members may voluntarily withdraw pursuant to the procedures described in 2-2-700, which results in a revocation of accreditation. All obligations owed to ACICS, including payment of fees, shall be fulfilled prior to resignation. The loss of accreditation shall be retroactive to the date that all outstanding obligations had previously been fulfilled, if applicable.

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

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

Section 5–Conditions of Payment. Sustaining fees are due and payable on August 15 and cover the period of July 1 – June 30. Nonpayment of annual fees by August 15 subjects a member to late fees and could result in an automatic loss of membership and loss of accreditation without a hearing. Sustaining fees are not subject to proration should an institution voluntarily withdraw or close during the year.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Section 12–Designated Delegate. Each main campus is entitled to one Designated Delegate who is authorized to vote on behalf of that member institution in all matters requiring a vote of the members. Appointment of the Designated Delegate is made by the chief executive officer of the institution by notice in writing to ACICS. Changes of Designated Delegate shall be made in writing at least fifteen (15) days prior to the date of any scheduled vote, which becomes the record date for determining eligibility to vote.

Section 13–Quorum. Twenty percent (20%) of the members eligible to vote and represented by Designated Delegates shall constitute a quorum at a meeting of the members for the transaction of business, except that any issue not properly noticed in the call for the meeting and that requires membership-wide participation may not be acted upon under new business. The Board of Directors may adopt such procedures as it deems necessary for the conduct of business. In the absence of an established procedure, Robert’s Rules of Order shall apply.

Section 14–Meetings of the Council. The Council shall convene as often as necessary to review materials attendant to the accrediting process and to take formal action on the accredited status of applicants.

ARTICLE VII

Appeals Process

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

Board when necessary.

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

ARTICLE VIII

Miscellaneous

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

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

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

Section 4–Books and Records. The Corporation shall keep at its office correct and complete books and records of the accounts and transactions of the Corporation and a current list of the members, directors, and officers of the Corporation. Such books and records may be in written form or in any other form capable of ready conversion to written form.

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

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

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

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

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

Section 10–Limitation of Liability. In any claim, cause, or action of any kind by any applicant for membership, member, or former member against ACICS, ACICS' liability is limited solely to reimbursement of any application or membership fees paid by said applicant for membership, member, or former member during the calendar year in which any such claim, cause, or action is initiated. ACICS shall not be liable to any applicant for membership, member, or former member for any direct, indirect, incidental, special, consequential, or any other type of damages, including but not limited to lost profits, nor shall ACICS be liable for any other person's or party's attorneys' fees or costs associated with any claim, cause, or action against ACICS. This limitation of liability applies to any and all liability or causes of action however alleged or arising to the fullest extent permissible by law.

ARTICLE IX

Litigation, Jurisdiction and Venue, and Expenses

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

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

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

Section 4–Binding Effect.

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

UNANNOUNCED VISIT FACT SHEET

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

VISIT PROCEDURES

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

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

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

1. the most recent Campus Accountability Report;
2. the current catalog and addenda (if applicable);
3. the current class schedule, including names of instructors and room numbers;
4. the most recent ACICS accreditation visit team report and institutional response;
5. a copy of each government program review and compliance audit conducted within the prior two years and any institutional responses;
6. faculty/personnel records;
7. all student records, including admissions, academic, and financial; and
8. copies of institutional advertising.

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

REPORT AND SUBSEQUENT ACTIONS

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

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

EXIT CONFERENCE

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

FEES

A fee will be assessed for this visit. Failure to remit payment for this fee may result in an adverse action.

INSTITUTIONAL PARTICIPATION

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

This Appendix includes the Council's criteria for institutional publications, including catalogs, advertising literature, and other published documents describing the institution.

CATALOG

The Council requires all accredited institutions and all applicant institutions to publish an acceptable catalog. An accredited institution with branch campuses may publish a common catalog, but it should be specific as to the faculty, programs, and student services available at each location (see Multiple-Campus Catalogs in this Appendix). All enrolled students must have access to the current catalog.

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

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

At a minimum, the catalog shall contain the following items:

1. A table of contents and/or an index.
2. An indication, on the front cover or on the title page, of the year or years for which the catalog is effective.
3. The names and titles of the administrators of the institution.
4. A statement of legal control which includes the names of trustees, directors, and officers of the corporation.
5. If the institution is now accredited, a statement denoting this fact. (See Statement of Accreditation in this Appendix.)
6. A statement of the mission of the institution.
7. A list of the full-time faculty members that shows the following:
 - (a) academic credentials held;
 - (b) institutions awarding the credentials; and
 - (c) the area of teaching specialization.
8. An academic calendar (calendar of events) showing beginning and ending dates of terms, quarters, or semesters; holidays; registration dates, etc.
9. The full disclosure of the institution's admission requirements, policies, and procedures, including the basis for admissions, test requirements, advanced standing requirements, and experiential learning assessment requirements.
10. A statement of the 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 (see Section 3-1-413).
11. A statement on the transferability of the credits in the programs that are offered (see Section 3-1-413).
12. A description of the contracts or agreements and the services to be provided if the institution has entered into an agreement with an accredited institution, an agreement with an unaccredited institution, or an

international partnership agreement (see Sections 2-2-504, 2-2-505, 2-2-506, and 2-2-507 for additional information).

13. A statement of the curricula (programs) offered, including for each:
 - (a) a statement of the objective or purpose of the curriculum;
 - (b) an accurate and complete listing of the courses included in each curriculum, each with a unique identifying number and title;
 - (c) the credit or clock hours awarded for each subject;
 - (d) the total credits or clock hours required for satisfactory completion of the curriculum;
 - (e) specialization options with a listing of all courses which make up that specialization;
 - (f) requirements for certification, licensing, or registration in the program career field, as appropriate; and
 - (g) any additional or special requirements for completion (such as practica or externships).
14. A description of each course (subject) offered including:
 - (a) identifying number;
 - (b) title;
 - (c) credit or clock hours awarded;
 - (d) a complete but concise description of the contents of the course; and
 - (e) prerequisites, if any.
15. An explanation of the grading or marking system (consistent with that appearing on the student transcript).
16. A definition of the unit of credit. If credit hour, identify whether quarter or semester. (See Section 3-1-516 for additional information.)
17. An explanation of standards of satisfactory progress. (See Section 3-1-420 for additional information.)
18. A description of the certificates, diplomas, and/or degrees awarded, together with a statement of the requirements to be met in each instance.
19. A statement of the tuition, fees, and all other regular and special charges.
20. A complete and accurate listing of all scholarships offered. (See Section 3-1-431.)
21. A statement of the institution's refund policy and formula relative to the method of financial obligation. This policy must be clearly outlined and must comply with Sections 3-1-433 and 3-1-434.
22. A statement pertaining to the nature and extent of student services offered (e.g., counseling and placement).
23. A grievance procedure that includes the name and address of ACICS, unless the grievance procedure is published in a student handbook.
24. If the institution offers degrees, the catalog must include the following information:
 - (a) for occupational associate's degree programs, identification of courses that satisfy the general education requirement and an explanation of the course numbering system;
 - (b) for academic associate's degree programs, identification of courses that satisfy the general education and concentration requirements and an explanation of the course numbering system;
 - (c) for bachelor's degree programs, identification of upper-division courses and courses that satisfy the general education and concentration requirements and an explanation of the course numbering system; and
 - (d) for post-baccalaureate or graduate degree programs (master's degree programs), a separate section in the catalog describing the program requirements, admissions procedures, transfer policies, graduation

requirements, regulations, and course descriptions. (See Section 3-6-800)

25. If the institution offers courses via distance education, the catalog must include the following information:
- (a) a description of each mode of distance education delivery method used;
 - (b) the admission requirements for the courses or program(s) of study offered through distance education required only if different from the admission requirements for the residential programs;
 - (c) a description of tests used in determining access to distance education courses and programs, if applicable;
 - (d) a description of the resources and equipment the students must have to avail themselves of the instruction (including, computer requirements such as hardware and software, internet access, access to library/college for monitoring of examinations, etc.); and
 - (e) the special costs and fees associated specifically with distance education (e.g., platform access fees, on-line library access fees, purchase of books on-line).

ADDENDA/SUPPLEMENT TO THE CATALOG

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

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

MULTIPLE-CAMPUS CATALOGS

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

ADVERTISING

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

1. All advertising and promotional literature provided by an institution must clearly indicate that training or education, and not employment, is being offered.
2. All advertising and promotional literature must include the correct name of the institution. So-called "blind" advertisements are not permitted.
3. Institutions advertising to attract students in classified columns of newspapers or the equivalent on websites and other electronic publications must use only classifications such as "Education," "Schools," and "Instruction." Headings such as "Help Wanted," "Employment," and "Business Opportunities" may be used only to procure employees for the institution.

4. Testimonials used in advertising must reflect the opinions or experience of a current or prospective student or graduate of the institution. Testimonial messages must be factual and portray current conditions. They cannot contain any representations that would be deceptive or could not be substantiated by the institution. The institution must maintain a written release from the individual providing the testimonial on file.
5. An institution shall not use the words “free” and “guarantee” for advertising or marketing purposes in a manner that is misleading to prospective or current students.
6. An institution shall not offer monetary incentives to the general public to visit, enroll in, attend, or complete a program. The institution cannot make guarantee or similar claims regarding job placement or salary for graduates.
7. References to financial aid availability must use the phrase “for those who qualify.” Financial aid cannot be the sole source of an advertisement.

PERFORMANCE INFORMATION DISCLOSURE

In its disclosure of student achievement data (as required under Section 3-1-704), the following disclosure statement must be included:

“These are the data reported to ACICS by the institution in its most recent Campus Accountability Report.”

STATEMENT OF ACCREDITATION

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

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

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

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

“Accredited by the Accrediting Council for Independent Colleges and Schools” or “Accredited Member, ACICS”

An institution is not permitted to use such statements as “fully accredited” or “accredited” without including the name of ACICS. An institution will not use or publicize the term “accredited” unless it is in fact accredited by ACICS or another recognized agency, or it has affirmative authority under state law. Any reference to stated authority for status as “registered,” “approved,” or “accredited” must include the name of the state extending the approval and must accurately identify the state agency. An applicant for ACICS accreditation may not disclose this fact in any manner.

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

An essential element in providing appropriate instruction and support services to students is monitoring their satisfactory academic progress (SAP). The Council requires all institutions to develop a policy of satisfactory academic progress that measures whether students are maintaining satisfactory academic progress in their educational program.

SATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS POLICY FOR INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

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

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

1. The institution has written standards and a schedule of satisfactory academic progress for all students, which are published in the catalog and appropriate institutional literature and are consistently applied to all students.
2. The institution strictly adheres to its published standards of satisfactory academic progress, monitors whether a student meets the minimum qualitative and quantitative components of the standards, and notifies students when satisfactory academic progress is not being made.
3. The standards of satisfactory academic progress provide for minimum qualitative standards, such as a grade point average or completion of work projects, which can be measured against a norm.
4. The policy defines a maximum time frame, not to exceed 150% of the normal program length, as defined by the institution, for all programs, in which the educational objective must be successfully completed (e.g., number of academic years, credit hours attempted, clock hours completed, months/weeks, terms or modules, as appropriate), as opposed to simply setting a time limit on eligibility for Title IV financial aid.
5. The institution has provisions for an evaluation point at least by the end of each academic year (or at 50% of the normal program length if the program is one academic year or less) that determine whether the student has met the qualitative and quantitative components of the standards.
6. The institution has provisions for utilizing and publishing a schedule designating the minimum percentage or amount of work that a student must successfully complete at the end of each increment to complete the educational program within the maximum time frame.
7. The institution has provisions for determining at the end of each increment whether the student has met the qualitative and quantitative components of the standards. The qualitative and quantitative standards must be cumulative and must include all periods of the student's enrollment regardless of whether or not the student receives federal financial aid.

8. The institution's policies define the effect on satisfactory academic progress of course withdrawals, incomplete grades, repeated courses, and non-punitive grades. The institution's policies define the effect of non-credit or remedial courses on satisfactory academic progress.
9. The institution has provisions for an evaluation at the end of the second academic year and at the end of each subsequent academic year, at which point the student must have a minimum cumulative grade point average (CGPA) of 2.0 on a scale of 4.0, C, or their equivalent, or has academic standing consistent with the institution's requirements for graduation. A student receiving federal financial aid who does not meet the CGPA standards at the end of the second year will no longer be eligible for financial aid, may not be placed on probation, and must be dismissed, unless the student wishes to continue without being eligible for federal financial aid. However, a student not meeting the CGPA standards at the end of the second year may remain as an enrolled student who is eligible for federal financial aid if there are documented mitigating circumstances (i.e., death in the family, sickness of the student).
10. If the institution places students on warning or probation, as defined in sections 11 and 12 below, the institution's policy must describe these statuses.
11. An institution that evaluates academic progress at the end of each payment period may assign warning status to a student who fails to make satisfactory academic progress. A student may be assigned to warning status without an appeal or other action by the student. For institutions awarding U.S. Department of Education Federal Financial Aid, a student on warning may continue to receive assistance under federal financial aid programs for one payment period despite a determination that the student is not making satisfactory academic progress.
12. The institution must have an appeal process for students who do not meet the requirements of the institution's satisfactory academic progress policy. When an institution grants a student's appeal for mitigating circumstances, the student will be placed on probation for a specified period of time and considered to be making regular satisfactory progress. While a student is on probation, the institution may require the student to fulfill specific terms and conditions such as taking a reduced course load or enrolling in specific courses.

If a student is not making satisfactory academic progress, the institution may place the student in an extended enrollment status. However, all credits attempted count toward the 150% of the normal program length even if the student is on extended enrollment. Grades may be replaced if that is the institution's written policy. At the discretion of the institution, a student with an approved appeal who exceeds one and one-half times the standard time frame as defined by the institution either as a regular student or in an extended enrollment status may receive the original academic credential for which he or she enrolled, provided that there are no additional financial obligations to the student.

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

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

16. The institution has provisions that the student must have a minimum CGPA of 2.0, C, or their equivalent for undergraduate programs and 3.0, B, or their equivalent for graduate programs upon graduation. For approved professional graduate programs, which require attainment of specified competencies and a licensure or certification, the institution has published and consistently follows an appropriate SAP policy.

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

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

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

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

SEPARATELY ELIGIBLE, STAND-ALONE ESL PROGRAMS

Council Requirements

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

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

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

1. Adhere to the stated mission of the program when developing the curricula;
2. Administer, at entrance and exit, a nationally recognized exam of English comprehension (e.g., Test of English as a Foreign Language, Test of Spoken English.)
3. Provide documentation that all admitted students are enrolled in accordance with Section 3-1-303.
4. Verify or assess at entrance, with supporting documentation, that the enrolling student already has knowledge, training, or skills in a vocational field, unless the student is enrolled solely to obtain ESL competency unrelated to a vocation (also a Department of Education regulation.)
5. Describe the placement services, if any, to be offered to graduates of the ESL program. Institutions are not required to include these graduates in their placement statistics.
6. Employ degreed faculty who have prior experience in this field of instruction.
7. Involve faculty in professional organizations and workshops enabling them to meet the special needs of the ESL student.

Department of Education Regulations

The institution must provide information or documentation that the program:

1. Consists solely of ESL instruction.
2. Admits only undergraduate students who it determines need ESL to use already existing knowledge, training, or skills.
3. Meets the other program and institutional eligibility requirements including:
 - (a) that it leads to a degree or certificate,

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

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

ESL COURSES AS PART OF AN ELIGIBLE PROGRAM

Council Requirements

Conversion from clock to credit hour for the ESL courses must be appropriate and in compliance with Department of Education regulations for remedial coursework.

Department of Education Regulations

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

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

SUMMARY

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

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

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

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

1. The Council maintains and makes available to member institutions, appropriate governmental agencies, and the public complete information regarding its accreditation criteria, policies, and practices; the institutions that it currently accredits, including the dates when the institutions are scheduled to be reviewed for renewals of accreditation; and the names, educational backgrounds, and professional qualifications of its commissioners and senior administrative staff. This information is provided in written documents available from the Council office or on the Council's website. These documents include a directory of accredited institutions and an annual report, copies of which are forwarded automatically to the U.S. Department of Education, state regulatory agencies, and other recognized institutional accrediting agencies.
2. The Council will notify the U.S. Department of Education, state regulatory agencies, other accrediting agencies, other interested third parties, and the public of all Council actions that affect an institution's grant of accreditation, institutional closings, and voluntary withdrawal or expiration of accreditation within 30 days.

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

- (a) a final decision to place an institution on show-cause or equivalent status; and
- (b) a final decision to deny, withdraw, suspend, revoke, or terminate the accreditation of an institution.

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

3. Within 60 days of a final negative action, the Council will also make available to the agencies above and the public upon request, a brief statement summarizing the reasons for the negative action determination and the official comments that the institution may wish to make with regard to the Council's decision, or evidence that the affected institution has been offered the opportunity to provide official comment.
4. Through written, established protocols, the Council will directly, and in a timely manner, inform the U.S. Department of Education of any institution which the Council has reason to believe is failing to meet its Title IV program responsibilities or is engaged in fraud and abuse, along with the Council's reasons for concern about the institution.

Further, the Council will make such notification if it believes the institution demonstrates systemic noncompliance with respect to use of the Department's definition of credit hour or significant noncompliance regarding conformity with commonly accepted practice in the assignment of credit hours

to one or more programs at the institution. The institution will then be given an opportunity to provide evidence demonstrating it is in compliance with Title IV requirements regarding credit hour assignments.

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

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

(b) as soon as practical, a list of all institutions which have applied for initial grants of accreditation.

This notification will include guidance on how third parties may comment on these institutions' qualifications for accreditation.

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

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

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

APPENDIX H PRINCIPLES AND REQUIREMENTS FOR NONTRADITIONAL EDUCATION

SECTION I

DISTANCE EDUCATION

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

INSTITUTIONAL READINESS

- (a) Institutions must notify and receive approval from ACICS prior to using distance education as a mode of delivery. (See Section 2-2-106.)
- (b) Institutions must have a plan to implement distance education instruction. At a minimum, the plan should include the rationale, resources, course/program objectives, content, and student assessment. Institutions must integrate this plan into the Campus Effectiveness Plan.
- (c) The instructional delivery method must be appropriate for students and the curriculum.
- (d) Institutional policies and procedures should be consistently applied using procedures that are appropriate to the mode of delivery.
- (e) Institutions must designate a qualified individual to oversee the distance education activities.

ADMISSIONS REQUIREMENTS AND ENROLLMENT

- (a) Institutions must identify the admission requirements of distance education courses and/or programs and how they differ from, if applicable, the on-ground admission requirements.
- (b) If an online admissions test is required, it must be administered in a manner which verifies the student's identity. Institutions must make it clear in writing at the time of enrollment how the student's identity will be verified throughout the course and program, how the student's privacy will be protected, and if the student will be assessed any additional charges associated with the verification of student identity.
- (c) Institutions must clearly and appropriately state any requirements the students must possess or have access to in order to access this mode of delivery.
- (d) Institutions must provide an online orientation program to familiarize the student with the equipment and resources used in the distance education activities and to orient the student to the distance education learning process.

CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTIONAL DELIVERY

- (a) Regardless of the instructional delivery method, the syllabi must identify the course learning objectives. Each course learning objective must support one or more program learning outcomes. (See Glossary definition of Syllabus.)
- (b) The course must provide sufficient and appropriate opportunities for interaction between faculty and students and among students.
- (c) Institutions must demonstrate to the Council that the clock or credit hours required and awarded are appropriate for the degrees and credentials offered using a thoroughly developed rationale. Credit award rationales for distance education delivery of courses or programs generally do not use the traditional lecture/laboratory/externship formulas for credit calculations (See Section 3-1-516, Course and Program Measurement).

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

FACULTY AND INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPORT

- (a) The institution must employ academically and/or experientially credentialed faculty to teach online courses appropriate to the subject matter.
- (b) Faculty hired to facilitate online instruction must be properly trained to utilize the institution's learning management system for purposes of instruction, communication, and assessment.
- (c) The instruction must provide an accessible and reliable learning management system and technical support to effectively facilitate online instruction and learning.
- (d) The institution must demonstrate that the student/teacher ratio appropriately supports faculty and student interaction, facilitation of interaction among students and interaction with curriculum content.
- (e) The institution must have a faculty development plan on file that is appropriate for each individual. For further information, see Section 3-1-543.

RESOURCES AND EQUIPMENT

- (a) The institution must demonstrate that it has adequate financial resources to support the form of delivery.
- (b) The institution must demonstrate that students taking online courses have access to the same or equivalent library resources and support as students taking courses in a physical classroom. If 50% or more of the student's program is approved for online delivery, these resources must include at a minimum access to a virtual library collection of program-related books, journals, and periodicals and access to virtual library and information technology services.

STUDENTS AND STUDENT SERVICES

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

STUDENT EVALUATION AND PROGRAM ASSESSMENT

- (c) The course learning objectives for a course delivered online must be the same as the learning objective for the same course delivered on ground.
- (d) Regardless of instructional delivery method, assessments and assignments should demonstrate student achievement of course learning objectives.
- (e) The institution must document that it conducts course/program evaluations, including assessment of student learning outcomes; student retention and placement; and student, graduate, faculty, and employer satisfaction. (See Section 3-1-111.)

PUBLICATIONS

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

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

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

These principles and guidelines are designed to inform institutions of the policies of the Council and to guide institutional representatives when designing, implementing, and evaluating an International Partnership Agreement (IPA).

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

ELEMENTS IN AN INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT

I. Duration and Jurisdiction.

1. Institutions must identify the start and end date of the agreement.
2. The agreement must list the signatories/partners involved in the international partnership.
3. The agreement must describe under which jurisdiction(s) the agreement will legally be bound, i.e. legal jurisdiction of the ACICS institution.

II. Administration of the International Partnership Activity.

1. Institutions must identify the individual with the overall responsibility for the activity.
2. Institutions must identify the on-site administrator for the activity.

CURRICULUM CONTENT, INSTRUCTION, AND DELIVERY

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

III. Faculty and Instructional Support.

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

IV. Admissions Procedures and Requirements. The institution must identify the admission requirements for enrolling in courses/programs abroad.

V. Students and Student Services.

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

2. **Financial Aid**

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

3. **Transfer of Credit**

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

4. **Student Orientation**

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

5. **Grievance Procedure**

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

6. **Student Records**

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

7. **Student Accommodations**

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

VI. Security.

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

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

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

IX. Student Evaluation and Program Assessment. The institution must implement an assessment plan that measures attainment of core competencies for courses and/or programs and measurable objectives for each course.

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

XI. Termination of Agreement and Teach-out Plan. Institutions must detail the plan for completion of programs or courses should an international partner fail to provide services.

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

Summary

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

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

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

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

1. **Education or Study Abroad Activities:** For all education or study abroad activities, other than those performed through a formal partnership agreement with an international institution, a U.S.-based institution is required to host a comprehensive Forum review and provide the final determination letter demonstrating substantial conformity with the Forum's standards, contained in the document, "Standards of Good Practice for Education Abroad (SGPEA)", published by The Forum on Education Abroad (<https://forumea.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/Standards-2015.pdf>); the requirements for maximum length of study as defined in #2 (below); and the academic residency requirement as described in #3 (below). For those education or study abroad activities performed through a formal partnership agreement, the IPA requirements apply (see section 2-2-510 and Appendix I). International institutions accredited by ACICS located outside the U.S. that are planning to initiate education or study abroad activities must disclose the nature and scope of such activities in writing to ACICS and seek prior approval.
2. **Maximum of Length of Education or Study Abroad Activity:** No more than 50 percent of a program's coursework may be completed through education or study abroad activities, including transfer credit, challenge examinations, and other sources. An education or study abroad program may not exceed an equivalent of two semesters in length.
3. **Academic Residency:** Students admitted to an education or study abroad program are those who must have satisfactorily completed a minimum of one full-time equivalent semester, quarter, or trimester online or on site through the home institution. Additionally, education or study abroad students are required to complete a minimum of one full-time equivalent semester, quarter, or trimester online or on-site through the home institution following completion of the education or study abroad activity and prior to completion of the credential.

This Appendix identifies the Council’s requirements for the content of a written Campus Effectiveness Plan (CEP) document. The CEP should provide information about the campus and how it measures and evaluates key elements of its operations in order to continuously improve its overall educational operations and meets its mission and objectives. The Council requires each campus to have a current CEP available that meets the requirements identified in this Appendix.

A main and branch campus may use similar language, format, and general content in CEPs, where appropriate. However, the CEP for each main and branch campus must also include information and data specific to its own campus including the characteristics and demographics of the current student population; the number of students enrolled in each program; campus and program retention, placement, graduation rates; results of surveys to determine current student, graduate, and employer satisfaction; and student learning outcomes.

Follow-up studies on students or former students, as an extension of or in addition to the analysis of satisfaction surveys, must be conducted by the institution and summarized within the CEP. The studies should provide further data or feedback regarding the programs and institution, relative to its performance as an educational institution or program, or regarding the effectiveness of its training in the workplace. Such studies must be conducted at least annually. (See Glossary of Definitions for *Follow-up*).

For those campuses offering programs in non-traditional modes of delivery, the distance education plan must be integrated into the CEP and the elements evaluated to include the effect of the modality on overall outcomes. Further, the campus must also incorporate its assessment of faculty satisfaction into its plan.

EVALUATION OF ELEMENTS IN THE CAMPUS EFFECTIVENESS PLAN (CEP)

The CEP shall, at minimum and at both the campus and program levels, report outcomes for each of the elements listed below. For each element, at the campus and program levels, as appropriate, baseline rates and levels for comparison and goals for the current evaluation period must be identified. A summary and analysis of previous performance, a rationale for the baseline rates and levels, goals, and a listing of activities that will be undertaken to achieve the goals must also be included. In accordance with Section 2-1-809, a specific plan to improve the retention, placement, and/or licensure pass rate(s) for each program not meeting current Council standards for retention and/or placement must be included within the CEP.

1. Retention rates.
2. Placement rates.

Student retention and graduate placement rates reported on the Campus Accountability Report (CAR) shall be included in the CEP for the most recent three years, or, if less than three years’ worth of CAR data is available, data for at least one reporting period. The data and information reported for retention and placement rates must demonstrate that the campus is maintaining or improving performance each year or, if that is not the case, then the campus must provide an explanation of mitigating circumstances affecting improved outcomes.

3. Graduation Rates

Graduation rates are based on scheduled to graduate cohort for each program offered at a campus. The graduation rates reported on the Campus Accountability Report (CAR) shall be included in the CEP for the most recent three years, or, if less than three years’ worth of CAR data is available, data for at least one reporting period.

4. Current student satisfaction.
5. Graduate satisfaction.
6. Employer satisfaction.

The level of satisfaction for each of the three elements identified above shall be determined and reported at least twice a year. For each of these three elements, the CEP must identify and describe what types of data were used to determine the level of satisfaction, how they were collected, and the target group's response rate. Graduate satisfaction should be evaluated no sooner than 30 days following and within 6 months after graduation and include both placed and non-placed graduates.

7. Student learning outcomes (SLOs).

Measuring and evaluating achievement of the SLOs are among the most important activities available to validate and confirm overall program and campus effectiveness. The assessments used to measure SLOs should be appropriately selected, with a rationale, to reflect the nature of the academic programs offered and must include direct assessments but may also include indirect measurements (see Glossary definitions of Direct Assessment and Indirect Assessment). For campuses that offer programs for which licensure or certification is required to practice in the specific career field, pass rates shall be evaluated as a required student learning outcome.

IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING OF THE CAMPUS EFFECTIVENESS PLAN (CEP)

Each campus shall systematically maintain progress reports on a periodic basis as defined by the campus but no less than two times during the CEP year that document completion of activities and changes in data and information for each of the CEP elements. Activities, as described in the reports, are to be specific and measurable.

In addition to the periodic progress reports, each campus is required to conduct a comprehensive evaluation of its plan at the end of the CEP year and to incorporate the results of that evaluation into the next year's CEP, as appropriate. The next year's CEP should contain a narrative section describing or explaining the consideration and, if applicable, the incorporation of the previous year's outcomes in the formulation of the new document.

INTRODUCTION

ACICS defines academic quality in terms of the extent to which an accredited institution achieves its intended student learning and student success outcomes. Student learning outcomes involve assessment of skill and competency attainment, including licensure or certification examination pass rates, where applicable. Student success outcomes include student retention or persistence and employment or placement.

Section 2-1-809 of the *Accreditation Criteria* requires periodic Council review of student achievement data, verified both by the institution as well as by the Council, submitted by the campus in the annual Campus Accountability Report (CAR) as required under Section 2-1-801. Appendix L provides an overview of the Council's student achievement standards and Council actions that will be taken if the student achievement data show that a campus or program is out of compliance with these standards.

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT STANDARDS

Student achievement standards outlined below apply to retention and placement rates at the campus and program levels, and licensure or certification examination pass rates, where applicable, at the program level. Minimum standards are intended to ensure that a substantial majority of students at ACICS-accredited campuses are retained, pass licensure or certification examinations where applicable, and find appropriate employment.

Consideration will be given to extenuating circumstances in relation to local, state, or national requirements or trends; student population; program length; graduates pending the completion of licensure or certification exams; economic or cultural factors; or any other reasonable circumstances impeding an institution's ability to meet or exceed the established compliance standard. However, the institution must also submit documented evidence of student learning through other appropriate indicators.

Campus-Level Student Achievement Elements (Effective 2013 Reporting Year)	Compliance Standard	Benchmark*
Retention Rate	60%	70%
Placement Rate	60%	70%
Program-Level Student Achievement Elements (Effective 2013 Reporting Year)	Compliance Standard	Benchmark*
Retention Rate	60%	70%
Placement Rate	60%	70%
Licensure Examination Pass Rates, where applicable**	60% ^	70%

*A campus and/or program whose rates fall below the Benchmark must develop and implement an Improvement Plan.

**Standards apply to programs for which licensure or certification is required to practice in the specific career field. The program is required to meet any higher licensure or certification agency standards.

^ The Council also will consider any conditions or negative actions from other oversight agencies, as well as

additional student achievement indicators when taking an action.

DATA COLLECTION AND VERIFICATION OF DATA INTEGRITY

As required under Standard 2-1-801, each main campus and each branch campus must submit an annual Campus Accountability Report (CAR). These reports are due on or before November 1 annually. The CAR reporting year is July 1 to June 30. Placement is accepted through November 1 of the CAR reporting year. Based on the student-by-student data submitted by the campus, the Council calculates the various student achievement rates. 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 (see Standard 3-1-203). In addition to the Council review of data on an annual basis, placement information is reviewed via monthly submissions, and all CAR data is subject to review and verification at any time, including during an on-site evaluation visit.

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT REVIEW AND COUNCIL ACTIONS

The Council reviews student achievement data for each campus on an annual basis and takes appropriate action. The Council reserves the right to take prompt adverse action once a campus and/or program is found out of compliance and will exercise its judgment in applying the guidelines outlined below:

Year Reporting	Rates	Campus and/or Program Status*	Council Directed Activities
Current Submission**	60-69.9%	Reporting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development and implementation of an Improvement Plan (IP) and inclusion into the Campus Effectiveness Plan (CEP) (<i>campus- and/or program-level</i>) Attendance at ACICS's Retention and Placement Workshop (<i>campus-level</i>)
	50-59.9%	Compliance Warning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Institutional review before the Council Development and implementation of an Improvement Plan (IP) and inclusion into the Campus Effectiveness Plan (CEP) (<i>campus- and/or program-level</i>) Submission of a partial Campus Accountability Report (CAR) which includes backup documentation to support the rate(s) reported for the specified period (<i>campus and/or program-level</i>) Submission of all communication and reporting with the oversight agency on licensure or certification performance (<i>program-level licensure/certification</i>) Submission of updated licensure/certification information as provided by the oversight agency, or a reliable third-party, or as collected and compiled by the campus with supporting backup documentation (<i>program-level licensure/certification</i>)

Year Reporting	Rates	Campus and/or Program Status*	Council Directed Activities
	Below 49.9%	Show-Cause	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Institutional Review before the Council • Submission of a corrective action plan to the Council along with documentation of implementation and effectiveness (<i>campus- and/or program-level</i>) • Submission of a partial Campus Accountability Report (CAR) which includes backup documentation to support the rate(s) reported for the specified period (<i>campus and/or program-level</i>) • Notification of its status to its current and prospective students on its website, internal student communication system, and appropriate admissions forms and reference materials (<i>campus- and/or program-level</i>) • Submission of a prepared campus closure plan and/or program termination plan that includes an audit of students currently enrolled along with a plan for teach out (<i>campus and/or program level</i>) • Submission of all communication and reporting with the oversight agency on licensure/certification performance (<i>program-level licensure/certification</i>) • Submission of updated licensure or certification information as provided by the oversight agency, or a reliable third-party, or as collected and compiled by the campus with supporting back up documentation (<i>program-level licensure/certification</i>)
	*	Adverse Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submission of a Campus Closure Application with a teach-out plan and agreements (campus level) • Institutional review before the Council (campus and/or program level) • Submission of a Program Termination Application with teach-out or transfer-out agreements (program level) • Immediate cessation of new enrollment (program level)
	50-59.9%	Show-Cause	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Institutional review before the Council

Year Reporting	Rates	Campus and/or Program Status*	Council Directed Activities
<p>Following Year 1</p>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submission of a corrective action plan to the Council along with documentation of implementation and effectiveness (campus and/or program level) • Submission of a partial Campus Accountability Report (CAR) which includes backup documentation to support the rate(s) reported for the specified period (campus and/or program level) • Notification of its status to its current and prospective students on its website, internal student communication system, and appropriate admissions forms and reference materials (campus and/or program level) • Submission of a prepared campus closure plan and/or program termination plan that includes an audit of students currently enrolled along with a plan for teach out (campus and/or program level) • Submission of all communication and reporting with the oversight agency on licensure or certification performance (program-level licensure/certification) • Submission of updated licensure or certification information as provided by the oversight agency, or a reliable third-party, or as collected and compiled by the campus with supporting back up documentation (program-level licensure/certification)
	<p>Below 49.9%</p>	<p>Adverse Action</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submission of a Campus Closure Application with a teach-out plan and agreements (<i>campus-level</i>) • Institutional Review before the Council (<i>campus and/or program-level</i>) • Submission of a Program Termination Application with teach-out or transfer-out agreements (<i>program-level</i>) • Immediate cessation of new enrollment (<i>program-level</i>)
<p>Following Year 2</p>	<p>Below 59.9%</p>	<p>Adverse Action</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submission of a Campus Closure Application with a teach-out plan and agreements (<i>campus-level</i>)

Year Reporting	Rates	Campus and/or Program Status*	Council Directed Activities
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Institutional Review before the Council (<i>campus and/or program-level</i>) • Submission of a Program Termination Application with teach-out or transfer-out agreements (<i>program-level</i>) • Immediate cessation of new enrollment (<i>program-level</i>)

* If the Council deems an institution or program significantly out of compliance relative to student achievement outcomes with little or no chance of coming into compliance within the maximum time frame, it will take an adverse action. If Council judges that the institution or program can come into compliance within the maximum time frames specified in Title II, Chapter 3, Introduction, it will take action appropriate to the circumstances such as compliance warning or show-cause directive.

**For any institution or program that receives a compliance warning or show-cause directive, the institution must come into compliance within the time frames specified in Title II, Chapter 3, Introduction (i.e. an institution whose longest program is less than one year in length has a time frame of twelve months to come into compliance).

^ A program show-cause directive or compliance warning is not a negative or conditioning action and is therefore not appealable. It is issued as an official notification to an institution that a program provided by the institution is out of compliance with agency standards.

DESCRIPTION OF STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT REVIEW ACTIONS

Immediate Adverse Action: The Council reserves the right to take immediate adverse action if the institution or one of its campuses is significantly out of compliance with the Council standards with little or no chance of coming into compliance within the maximum time frame. An adverse action for an institution is a withdrawal by suspension of the institution's accreditation, or withdrawal of inclusion of the branch campus's approval within the accredited status of the institution. An adverse action for a program is the withdrawal of the program's approval, except for teach-out purposes for the currently enrolled students. An institution, in accordance with Section 2-3-403(a), will be allowed the opportunity for a review before the Council prior to the execution of an adverse action.

Withdrawal by Suspension or Withdrawal of Program Approval: If an institution or one of its campuses does not come into compliance within the time frames specified by a compliance warning or show-cause directive, then the Council will issue a withdrawal by suspension of the institution's accreditation, or withdrawal of inclusion of the branch campus's approval within the accredited status of the institution.

If a program does not come into compliance within the time frames specified by a compliance warning or show-cause directive, then the Council will issue a withdrawal of program approval and the institution will be required to immediately cease new enrollments and terminate the program.

Show-Cause: The show-cause directive is an action by which the Council determines that the campus and/or program is materially out of compliance and provides the institution an opportunity for a review before the Council concerning the deficiencies identified. The campus must submit evidence to the Council of the corrective actions planned and implemented to improve performance and come into compliance within one year. Further, the campus must prepare a campus closure and/or program termination plan. In addition, the campus and/or program must provide notification of its status to all current and prospective students. If the show-cause directive is as a

result of licensure or certification examination pass rate performance, the campus must also provide updated pass rate information and all communication from the oversight agency concerning the monitoring of its performance.

Compliance Warning: A campus and/or program on compliance warning is required to evaluate, analyze, and if necessary, revise the Improvement Plan implemented while on student achievement reporting. The Council reserves the right to request the submission of the evaluation and analysis of the Improvement Plan for review. The campus will be given the opportunity for a review before the Council to provide evidence of improvement at the campus and/or program levels. As a result of being found out of compliance, the campus and/or program must come in to compliance within the time frame specified in Title II, Chapter 3, Introduction.

Reporting: If a campus and/or program reports student achievement retention or placement rates or program-level licensure or certification examination pass rates between 60-70%, it is considered on student achievement reporting. The campus and/or program is required to show improvement and must develop and implement an Improvement Plan that is fully incorporated into the Campus Effectiveness Plan (CEP). The Improvement Plan must identify the factors negatively impacting the student achievement outcome, the specific activities to be implemented or being implemented to address the deficiency, and an analysis of any changes realized since its implementation. This plan will be reviewed during any on-site evaluation visit.

Data Collection and Verification: ACICS standards are applied by the Council to data collected from each main and branch campus through the annual Campus Accountability Report (CAR). The Council reviews campus- and program-level retention and placement rates and program-level licensure or certification examination pass rates where licensure or certification is required for employment in the state the campus is located. The CAR reporting year is July 1 to June 30, and placement is accepted through November 1 of the CAR reporting year.

Please refer to Campus Accountability Report (CAR) Guidelines and Instructions for details regarding online submission of the annual report, instructions, types of information collected, and calculation formulas.

OCCUPATIONAL PROGRAMS

The offering of programs with occupational objectives requires the review and approval of ACICS consistent with the procedures of Sections 2-2-105 and 2-2-120. As defined, these programs would be included within the scope of the campus's approval or institution's accreditation, and therefore subject to the following expectations of review to assure academic quality.

EVALUATION OF OCCUPATIONAL PROGRAMS**Admissions and Tuition**

An admissions policy, appropriate to the scope and outcomes for the program, must be established and published, with consistent application to similar students.

Tuition and any applicable fees must be reasonable for the program with notice to students of any changes as well as any balances due at the time of completion.

Program Oversight & Instruction

Evidence must be maintained to demonstrate that the program has qualified oversight and instructors in the area of study to assure adequate preparation of the students. The program must meet all state or licensing requirements for instruction, licensure preparation, and outcomes.

Student Achievement Outcomes

Retention, placement, and licensure pass rates, if applicable, will be evaluated consistent with the guidelines of *Appendix L*. The program must also be included in the campus's effectiveness plan for evaluation of each required element.

AVOCATIONAL COURSES/PROGRAMS

These programs and/or courses do not require ACICS approval except if required by the state or other licensing/oversight body. Further, these programs and/or courses may only be disclosed in the catalog and other publication/media with clear notice to students and other interested parties that they are not approved by ACICS as part of the institution's accreditation and are offered for the sole purpose of continuing education, professional development, or preparation.

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Exhibit 4 – Initial Application

Pre – Application

Minimum Eligibility Self-Assessment(MESA) Checklist

- **IAP Checklist** - Self-assessment of minimum eligibility. (Item 1)
- Upon meeting minimum eligibility, institution will receive automated notice to move to registration.

Registration

- Creation of Institutional Information and Program Info. (Items 2A and 2B)
- Upon completion of registration, reviewed by analyst. Once complete and data demonstrates minimum eligibility requirements, invitation to apply issued. (Item 3)



Administrator (Michelle Edwards) Member Center Administration IAP Checklist

Title

IAP50PercentClassroom	Yes
IAPAppropriateMission	Yes
IAPAwardsCredentials	Yes
IAPChecklistResult	1a
IAPComparablePrograms	Yes
IAPComplianceWithLaw	Yes
IAPConformsAcceptedPractices	Yes
IAPContactEmail	harold.harris@sitanka.us
IAPCurrentEnrollmentInPrograms	Yes
IAPDateOfFirstClassStart	
IAPFinancialStability	Yes
IAPHoldsLicensure	Yes
IAPInstitutionIndependent	Yes
IAPInstitutionName	Si Tanka University
IAPLocatedInUS	Yes
IAPMinimumContactHours	Yes
IAPMinimumGraduates	Yes
IAPNoDebarmentByACICS	Yes
IAPNotUnderNegativeAction	Yes
IAPPreliminaryVisit	No
IAPRegisteredAsCorp	Yes
IAPPostSecondaryInstitution	Yes
IAPTWOYearsPrior	Yes
EmailSent	Yes
IAPOrganized	Yes
IAPOffersPrimarilyOnline	No

WorkflowStartStatus

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Close



Member Center Administration

Administrator (Kay Ropko) Member Center Administration Institution Information

Location

Corporate Type * Privately Held Corporation

Date of Original Establishment of Institution * 3/25/2010

Has the institution changed ownership since its original establishment? * No

Date of Licensure/Registration/Charter by appropriate agency * 11/1/2013

Name of Licensing Agency * Secretary of State of State of South Dakota

Is the institution currently accredited? * Yes

Accrediting Agency

Date of Grant Expiration

Does the institution participate in federal financial aid programs (Title IV)? * No

Is the institution under any negative state, federal, or accreditation investigation or action? * No

Distance Education Offered * <100%

Are you offering distance education through a consortium agreement? * No

CEO Name * Harold Harris

CEO Email * harold.harris@mnu.edu

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Save

ID	Credential Awarded	CIP Code	Approved Program Name	Total Enrollment	Total Graduates	Modified	Campus ID	Number of Credits Awarded	Minimum Program Length in Weeks	Maximum Program Length in Weeks	Unit Of Credit
3293	Master's Degree	11.0701	MS -- Computer Science	14	9	5/27/2016 15:31	00276405	36	2	5	Semester
3294	Master's Degree	52.0201	MBA -- Management	9	7	5/27/2016 15:31	00276405	36	2	5	Semester
3295	Master's Degree	52.0801	MBA -- Finance	8	5	5/27/2016 15:31	00276405	36	2	5	Semester
3290	Bachelor's Degree	52.1201	BSIT -- Management Information System	5	11	5/27/2016 15:30	00276405	120	3	7	Semester
3289	Bachelor's Degree	11.0701	BS-IT Computer Science	7	9	5/27/2016 15:30	00276405	120	3	7	Semester
3292	Bachelor's Degree	52.0801	BBA -- Finance	8	7	5/27/2016 15:29	00276405	120	3	7	Semester
3291	Bachelor's Degree	52.0201	BBA -- Business Administration	9	8	5/27/2016 15:29	00276405	120	3	7	Semester



May 20, 2016

ID Code 00276405

SENT VIA E-MAIL ONLY

Mr. Harold Harris
Chief Executive Officer
Si Tanka University
5000 S. Broadband Lane
Suite 123
Sioux Falls, SD 57108

harold.harris@sitanka.us

Dear Mr. Harris:

Subject: ACICS Invitation to Apply

Thank you for your interest in accreditation with the Accrediting Council for Independent Colleges and Schools ("ACICS" or "Council").

We have reviewed the preliminary information submitted and have determined that your institution is eligible to continue with the application process. Please log in to our Member Center using the username and password created during the registration process. The \$6,000 application fee, applies for one year and will be payable by credit card during the first phase of the initial application. Detailed instructions will be available to you upon log-in. Please review this information.

The following documents are required for electronic upload in the first phase of the application process (Phase IA):

1. A copy of the institution's license or authorization to operate a postsecondary institution;
2. An Ownership Disclosure Form; and
3. Audited financial statements for the most recently completed fiscal year.

Upon receipt of payment and the upload of the audited financial statements, the institution's application will be moved to Phase IB. Once the institution receives approval of the audited financials, the institution must upload the following to complete Phase IB:

4. An Initial Applicant Campus Accountability Report (institutional and programmatic);
5. A draft Campus Effectiveness Plan (CEP);
6. A Certificate of Attendance from an ACICS Initial Accreditation workshop.

If you need any assistance in completing the online application, please contact Ms. Karly Zeigler, New Institutions Development Lead, at kzeigler@acics.org.

Mr. Harris
Page 2
May 20, 2016

Upon receipt of the items noted above, these materials will be reviewed by staff to determine when a resource visit should be conducted to assess your institution's readiness to proceed with the self-study. **Please note that an evaluation visit will not be conducted until appropriate and acceptable financial statements have been reviewed by staff members and/or the Council.** ACICS is required to call for public comments on institutions applying for accreditation. Your institution's name will be posted on our Web site and your current accrediting agency notified. Any comments received from the public or other accrediting or state agencies will be considered in the application process.

If the resource visit report indicates that the institution meets all eligibility requirements, you will be invited to continue with the self-evaluation portion of the application process. After the self-evaluation materials and supporting documents have been received and reviewed, the Initial Grant visit will be conducted by a team of evaluators. The report of this visit and the institution's response to it will be presented to the Council, and a decision on your institution's application will be made.

The scheduling of both visits depends on the travel schedule of the Council staff and the date your application materials are received relative to the scheduled Council meetings. Each year the Council meets in April, August, and December.

The Council requires that the chief on-site administrator of an institution which submits an application for initial accreditation attend an ACICS Accreditation Workshop prior to the Resource Visit. Please visit the ACICS Web Site at www.acics.org for information with regard to upcoming Accreditation Workshops.

Appendix A of the *Accreditation Criteria* contains the ACICS Bylaws. Application for accreditation and membership in ACICS constitutes your agreement to be bound by the provisions of the *Accreditation Criteria*, including the ACICS Bylaws, as they may be amended from time to time, regardless of whether your institution becomes a member of ACICS by receiving accreditation.

We look forward to receipt of the application materials. Please note the assigned ID Code and use it on all correspondence sent to the Council office. If you have any questions about these procedures, please feel free to contact me at (202) 336-6797.

Sincerely,

(b)(6)



Joseph E. Gurubatham, Ed. D.
Executive Vice President, Accreditation and Institutional Development

C: Ms. Shantel Krebs, South Dakota Secretary of State (sos.edu@state.sd.us)

ACCREDITING COUNCIL FOR INDEPENDENT COLLEGES AND SCHOOLS

750 FIRST STREET, NE, SUITE 980 • WASHINGTON, D.C. 20002-4241 • (202) 336-6780



Initial Resource Evaluation Visit

SI TANKA UNIVERSITY
5000 Broadband Lane
Sioux Falls, SD 57108
Telephone: (605) 728-1941
E-mail: harold.harris@sitanka.us
Web site: www.sitanka.us

ID Code: 00276405

Ms. Karly Zeigler
New Institutions Development Lead
ACICS

August 10, 2016

Programs offered by Si Tanka University

CIP Code	Program Title	Credential Level	Contact Hours	Sem/Qtr Credit Hours	Weeks	Current Enrollment	Graduates from Previous Year (ICAR Reporting Period)
11.0701	Computer Science	Bachelor of Science	5400	120	60	6	4
52.1201	Management of Information Systems	Bachelor of Science	5400	120	60	5	6
52.0803	Finance	Bachelor of Business Administration	5400	120	60	7	4
52.0201	Management	Bachelor of Business Administration	5400	120	60	6	1
11.0701	Computer Science	Master of Science	1620	36	36	11	2
52.0803	Finance	Master of Business Administration	1620	36	36	6	0
52.0201	Management	Master of Business Administration	1620	36	36	8	2

Program names/data must match that on the institution's State Approval/ECAR.

Institutional Overview (Include information for any learning sites)

Founded in 2010, Si Tanka University's primary goal is to educate and nurture students, to create knowledge, and to provide service to our community and beyond. STU advances the standards for evidence-based improvement of student learning and is committed to excellence and proud of the diversity of our University family. The University integrates an enduring business and information technology professional disciplines to create a comprehensive learning experience. Our undergraduate and graduate programs promote academic excellence, advance innovative scholarship and foster leadership in service to others.

Visit Overview

To begin the visit, staff met with Dr. Adam Yang, Dean of Academic Affairs and Dr. Harold Harris, President. Staff was given a tour of the facility. Documentation was reviewed onsite to include student, staff, and faculty files, campus catalog, Campus Effectiveness Plan, and other materials as requested. Upon the conclusion of the visit, extensive discussions were had with Dr. Yang and Dr. Harris regarding the areas noted within this report.

Minimum Eligibility Requirements (Section 1-2-100)

1. Does the institution offer postsecondary educational programs that are designed to educate students for professional, technical, or occupational careers?
 Yes No

2. Does the institution offer at least one program that is a minimum of 300 clock hours in length?
 Yes No

3. Does the institution require prospective students to possess a high school diploma or its equivalent, or to be beyond the age of compulsory school attendance and demonstrate, through valid assessment, an ability-to-benefit from the educational experience?
 Yes No

Students are required to submit a highschool or secondary school transcript as part of the admissions requirements.

4. Is the institution licensed by the appropriate state education agency for postsecondary institutions?
 Yes No

The institution holds and Certificate of Authorization Postsecondary Education from the State of South Dakota, filed on November 1, 2013.

5. Has the institution offered educational services to the general public for at least two years immediately prior to consideration of the application by ACICS?
 Yes No

The first cohort began in fall of 2010.

6. Is the mission of the institution to offer educational programs which help students develop skills and competencies to enhance their careers?
 Yes No

While the mission is appropriate, the objectives to support the mission are not devoted "substantially" to career-related education. The stated mission and objectives read as follows: The mission of Si Tanka University is to provide accessible, innovative, high-quality higher education degree programs for individuals to learn independent of time and place in a technology-rich, information-driven global economy.

Goals and Objectives

1. To enhance and promote excellence in teaching and learning:
 - To support faculty with the necessary resources for professional and personal development.
 - To provide the necessary resources to meet the dynamic learning and developmental needs of our students.
 - To develop, encourage and support effective and innovative teaching and learning environments and approaches that will assist the University in adapting to changing student academic needs.
 - To increase and strengthen transfer opportunities with educational institutions and affiliations with educational partnerships.

2. To offer opportunities for life long learning and personal enrichment:
 - To use community-based physical, financial, and human resources available to complement those within the University.
 - To provide educational and cultural, activities for the STU community.
 - To provide technological education.

3. To develop and support a student centered collegial environment:
 - To promote and provide friendly, informative and supportive services for students.
 - To develop a systematic and integrated approach to student persistence and success.
 - To maintain and enhance a comprehensive enrollment management system to achieve and maintain effective recruitment and retention of students.

4. To create and sustain a technological environment that is supportive of academic and administrative needs:
- To provide for continuous review and upgrading of technology as it serves academic and administrative applications.
 - To promote computer competency for students, faculty and staff.
 - To maintain an administrative information system that is useful, integrated and user friendly.
5. Provide career programs to prepare students to function in a technologically and socially changing world:
- To evaluate and update curricula, programs, and courses in response to workforce needs.
 - To accommodate the diverse needs of students entering the workforce, seeking to advance further in their careers, or retraining for new jobs.
7. Is the enrollment in each program offered sufficient to support course work and learning experiences that constitute measurable and defined educational programs, and is enrollment in programs sufficient to allow ACICS to assess the educational effectiveness of those programs?
 Yes No
8. Does the institution have a sufficient number of graduates from a majority of its programs to enable ACICS to assess the educational effectiveness of those programs?
 Yes No
9. Is there evidence that the institution is in compliance with all applicable laws and regulations?
 Yes No
10. How is the institution organized?
 as a corporation as a limited liability company
 as a limited partnership with a corporate general partner
11. Has the chief executive officer of the institution authorized the evaluation for accreditation?
 Yes No
12. Have the owners or managers of the institution ever been debarred by ACICS?
 Yes No

Institutional Readiness

The Campus Effectiveness Plan (Sections 3-1-110 – 3-1-113):

1. Has the institution developed a Campus Effectiveness Plan (CEP)?
 Yes No

The institution provided the 2016-2017 Campus Effectiveness Plan.

2. Does the plan contain or do the following:
- a. A description of the characteristics of the programs offered
 Yes No Needs Improvement
 - b. A description of the student population
 Yes No Needs Improvement
 - c. A description of the types of data that will be used for assessment
 Yes No Needs Improvement
 - d. Identify outcomes
 Yes No Needs Improvement
 - e. State how continuous improvement will be made to improve or enhance outcomes
 Yes No Needs Improvement
 - f. A plan for distance education that includes the rationale, resources, course/program objectives, content, and student assessment
 Yes No Not Applicable (*No distance education activity*)

The CEP includes appropriate analysis of the student population and how it relates to the outcomes of the CEP elements. The plan for distance education does not include all of the necessary elements as outlined in Appendix H of the *Criteria*, and the analysis of distance education students is not integrated into the other areas of the CEP. If there are not students currently enrolled via distance education, this needs to be stated.

3. Are the following five required elements included in the plan and evaluated?
- a. Student retention rates Yes No Needs Improvement
 - b. Student placement rates Yes No Needs Improvement
 - c. Level of graduate satisfaction Yes No Needs Improvement
 - d. Level of employer satisfaction Yes No Needs Improvement
 - e. Student learning outcomes Yes No Needs Improvement
 - f. Student Satisfaction Yes No Needs Improvement

Retention rate is stated as 97% in the CEP but 100% in the CAR. This needs to be updated in the CEP. The graduation rate is also included in the CEP which will be a required element as of January 1, 2017. The CEP measures student learning outcomes including College Assessment of Academic Proficiency (CAAP) scores for general education, cumulative GPA, as well as individualized outcomes for each program..

4. Are appropriate baselines and goals identified for all of the elements listed above?
 Yes No Needs Improvement

Baselines and goals must be identified for all elements, not just retention and placement.

5. Has the institution identified and described how the data used to assess the five required elements was collected and included a rationale for using the type of data chosen?
 Yes No Needs Improvement
6. Has the institution provided a summary and analysis of the data collected and an explanation of how the data have been used to improve educational processes?
 Yes No Needs Improvement
7. Has the campus published specific activities that will be undertaken to meet their goals?
 Yes No Needs Improvement

Even those elements with positive outcomes which met or exceeded the previous years' should have action plans for improving.

8. How does the campus plan to show that the CEP is evaluated at least annually and that periodic progress reports are being completed?
 There is a CEP committee which meets quarterly. The CEP is updated annually along with their strategic planning.

Educational Activities:

1. Who is responsible for program administration? What are this person's qualifications? (Section 3-1-511)
 Dr. Adam Yang is the academic dean at the University and has held this role since 2012. He holds a Ph.D. and master's degree in political science from Columbia University and a bachelor's degree in Law from National Chengchi University in Taiwan. His previous experience includes executive director at the Institute for Cross-Strait Relations from 2001-2011.

2. Is there evidence that there is appropriately assigned leadership in each program areas?

Yes No

Dr. [REDACTED] who holds a Ph.D. in Computer science and has related field experience, oversees the information technology and computer science programs in addition to Dr. Yang who has direct oversight over the business and management programs.

3. Is there an academic freedom policy? (Section 3-1-202(c))

Yes No

If yes, how is it communicated to the faculty?
 While the University does employ an academic freedom policy, it is not clearly stated.

4. Is there a policy for academic governance? (Section 3-1-500)
 Yes No

Does it contain, at a minimum, address the role of the faculty in the following?

- a. Development of the educational program.
 Yes No
- b. Selection of course materials, instructional equipment and other educational resources.
 Yes No
- c. Systematic evaluation and revision of the curriculum.
 Yes No
- d. Assessment of student learning outcomes.
 Yes No
- (e) Planning for institutional effectiveness.
 Yes No

While many of the items above are addressed elsewhere throughout the Faculty Handbook, they must be addressed in the actual policy.

5. Is there evidence that faculty meetings are held regularly and both full and part time faculty members participate? (Section 3-1-544)
 Yes No
6. Does the formation of policies and the design of educational programs involve students, graduates, administrators, faculty, and other interested parties such as advisory committees? (Section 3-1-512(a))
 Yes No Needs Improvement

The institution surveys their students, graduates and employers to gain feedback. The University also employs an advisory board, however it is unclear as to which stakeholders are involved. The roles of participants should be added to sign-in sheets/meeting minutes.

7. Are community resources utilized and documented? (Section 3-1-512(c))
 Yes No Needs Improvement

Documentation of community resources was not readily available by program.

8. Are instructors teaching general education courses assigned in keeping with the minimum requirements as stated in the *Accreditation Criteria* (Section 3-3-302, etc. & Glossary)?
 Yes No Not Applicable (non-degree institution)

Several of the instructors teaching general education courses do not have evidence of the 18 hours of coursework in the course discipline. For most instructors, their Ph.D.

or master's degree is the only transcript available in their file. These do not include any general education coursework that has been completed previously which may exhibit the 18 credit hours to qualify the instructors to teach such general education courses. The campus must do an internal audit of all faculty credentials to ensure they have the evidence of needed credits for all courses taught.

9. Do the program's general education courses meet Council expectations? (Section 3-3-202, etc. & Glossary)
 Yes No Not Applicable (non-degree institution)
10. Who is the librarian? Is this individual appropriately trained, with evidence of participation in professional growth activities?
 Yes No Not Applicable (non-degree institution)

Ms. [REDACTED] is the University librarian. As evidenced in her file, Ms. [REDACTED] holds a MLS degree from Indiana University-Bloomington. She has previous experience as a library director for two other institutions since 2015. While this individual is qualified, there is no evidence of participation in professional growth.

For Master's Degree Programs Only

1. What library resources does the campus provide to support a better understanding of scholarly research at the graduate level? (Section 3-6-100)
The university utilizes an e-library which provides access to books, reference, journals, magazines, and streaming video. Library usage is also a requirement stated in the course syllabi.
2. Is there an oversight committee for the master's degree program that includes students, faculty, administrators, and employers? (Section 3-6-302)
 Yes No

For Institutions Offering Distance Education (Appendix H):

1. Does the institution have a plan for implementing distance education instruction?
 Yes No

Does the plan include the following:

(a) Rationale?

Yes No

(b) Resources?

Yes No

(c) Course/program objectives?

Yes No

(d) Course content?

Yes No

(e) Student assessment?

Yes No

2. Who is assigned to provide administration of the distance education at the institution, and what are this person's qualifications?

There is currently no individual assigned to oversee the distance education at the University.

3. Are admissions or any other requirements for distance education courses/programs identified by the institution?

Yes No Not Applicable (no additional admissions requirements)

Syllabi: (Section 3-1-513(a) & Glossary)

1. Is an appropriately detailed syllabus on file for each course that includes:

(a) Title and course descriptions

Yes No

(b) Course numbers

Yes No

(c) Course prerequisites and/or co-requisites

Yes No

(d) Instructional contact hours/credits

Yes No

(e) Learning objectives

Yes No

(f) Instructional materials and references

Yes No

(g) Topical outline of the course

Yes No

(h) Instructional methods

Yes No

(i) Assessment criteria

Yes No

(j) Method of evaluating students

Yes No

(k) Date the syllabus was last reviewed

Yes No

Title IV requirement for campuses that have lecture courses in credit hour programs or clock-to-credit hour programs:

(l) Out-of-class work assignments that support the learning objectives for the course

Yes No

(m) A description of the minimum amount of time a student is expected to spend on completion of the work assignments

Yes No

A topical outline is not present in some of the syllabi reviewed. There was no date of last review on any of the syllabi reviewed.

Faculty Files:

1. Is there a faculty grievance policy?
 Yes No

2. Does the institution have official transcripts on file for all credentials held by all faculty members? (Section 3-1-542)
 Yes No

All of the transcripts reviewed in the faculty files are copies and therefore not official. The institution utilizes an electronic management system, but they will need to present the official transcripts for the full team to review. Further, even many of the transcripts that are on file are not official due to the fact that they are issued to the student rather than to an administrator at the University.

3. Have all foreign credentials been evaluated for equivalency to a credential earned in the U.S. by a member of NACES or AICE? (Section 3-1-541)
 Yes No Not applicable

There were no foreign transcripts on file.

4. Is there a current Faculty Development Plan on file for each faculty member? (Section 3-1-543)
 Yes No Needs Improvement

There was no evidence of professional development plans or the necessary back up documentation of activities that have occurred.

5. Does the institution maintain evidence that faculty 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? (Section 3-1-202(b))
 Yes No Needs Improvement

The faculty sign an "Adjunct Faculty Contract" which states their responsibilities, however it does not explicitly state to whom they report.

6. Does the institution maintain documentation of the evaluation of faculty members by the administration? (Section 3-1-202(b))
 Yes No Needs Improvement

7. Does the institution maintain documentation of student evaluations of courses?
 Yes No Needs Improvement

For Master's Degree Programs Only

8. Do all faculty members in the master's program possess appropriate graduate degrees?
 Yes No
9. Are at least one-half of the graduate-level courses taught by faculty possessing terminal degrees?
 Yes No

Administrative files:

1. Does the institution maintain evidence that 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?
 Yes No Needs Improvement
2. Does the institution maintain documentation of the evaluation of staff members?
 Yes No Needs Improvement

There were no evaluations on file for staff roles.

3. Is there a staff grievance policy?
 Yes No Needs Improvement

Student Records and Admissions:

1. Does the campus use an enrollment agreement for each enrolled student that:
(Section 3-1-414)
- (a) Clearly outlines the financial obligations of both the institution and the student?
 Yes No
- (b) Outlines all program related tuition and fees?
 Yes No
- (c) Has a signature of the student and the appropriate school representative?
 Yes No

While enrollment agreements were not readily available in the printed student files, the administration provided an example of an enrollment agreement. The agreement appears to contain all of the necessary elements, however signatures could not be evidenced. The administration must have all enrollment agreements available for review at the time of the full team visit.

- Is there evidence that students receive a copy?
 Yes No Needs Improvement

The form provides a sign off for receipt by the student.

2. Does the institution maintain evidence of admissions requirements? (Section 3-1-414)
- Yes No Needs Improvement

There is no documentation to demonstrate the "evidence at a level consistent with that expected of graduate level candidates and career objectives consistent with the objectives of the program for which the prospective student is applying" in the files for students applying to the graduate programs.

3. Are admissions standards applied consistently among similarly circumstanced students (Section 3-1-411)?
- Yes No

4. Does the institution notify students of articulation agreements and the transferability of credits? (Section 3-1-413)
- Yes No

5. If the institution accepts ability-to-benefit students is there evidence of the required advising and comparisons? (Section 3-1-303(b&c))
- Yes No Not applicable

6. Are student records safely protected from theft, fire, water damage, or other possible loss? (Section 3-1-303(f))
- Yes No

Records are backed up on a separate server daily and weekly records are backed up and kept in a fireproof locked safe.

7. Does the institution maintain a permanent academic record for each student? (Section 3-1-303(e))
- Yes No

Standards of Academic Progress (SAP) (Section 3-1-420 & Appendix D)

For Institutions in the US

1. Does the institution have a published SAP Policy?
- Yes No

The University publishes a Satisfactory Academic Progress as well as an Unsatisfactory Academic Progress policy in their catalog and on their website. These must be combined into one comprehensive policy with all of the necessary elements listed below and published in the University's catalog.