TO: ACICS-Accredited Institutions and Other Interested Parties

FROM: Accrediting Council for Independent Colleges and Schools

DATE: January 7, 2008

SUBJECT: Final Criteria, Proposed Criteria, and Other Information

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I. FINAL CRITERIA REVISIONS

At its December 2007 meeting, the Council reviewed specific areas of the ACICS Accreditation Criteria outlined in Sections I and II. The language contained in Section I represents language that was previously reviewed by ACICS constituents or that represents a clarification of previously approved criteria. Section II represents proposed criteria changes as a result of the December 2007 meeting. The changes appearing in Section I are final, effective immediately, unless otherwise stated.

The Council updated the respective sections of the Accreditation Criteria, to reflect all final criteria revisions. To obtain a current copy of the Accreditation Criteria, please visit our Web site at www.acics.org. The Accreditation Criteria can be found in the publications section of the Web site.

The following criteria were previously reviewed by the field and the Council and have been accepted as final, effective immediately:

A. Programs of Study, Changes to Programs

2-2-503. Changes to Programs

(a) Substantive Changes. Institutions must apply for approval from ACICS for any of the following changes to a program prior to their implementation or the revised program will be considered an unapproved program. Failure to do so will result in a show-cause action for offering an unapproved program or unapproved mode of delivery. Institutions must submit the appropriate form and supporting documentation for the following:

(i) the offering of a program at a higher education credential than currently approved for;

(ii) any changes of 25% or more in existing contact hours, credit awarded, curriculum content (courses offered), or program length of a currently awarded program;

(iii) a change from clock to credit hours or vice versa, or a change from quarter to semester credit hours or vice versa;

(iv) a change in the overall objective of the program;

(v) the initiation of an on-line delivery format for less than 50% of a program of study;

(vi) the initiation of an on-line delivery format for more than 50% or more of a program of study.

Changes (i) through (iv) to programs as indicated above require the submission and approval of a New Program Application Form. Any changes, as noted in (v) and (vi) above, require the submission and
approval of a Distance Education Activity Application. An institution with initial approval may offer only programs or courses included in the Distance Education Activity Application until final approval by the Council. If the institution wishes to offer additional programs on-line before final action by the Council, it must separately obtain approval for each program. If the institution wishes to add, delete, or modify on-line courses before final action by the Council, it must separately obtain approval for each course change.

B. Tuition and Charges

3-1-432. Tuition and Charges.

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

(a) The tuition and other charges, including the period for which the student is financially obligated, shall be clearly stated in the catalog of the institution. The existence of any separate or comparable publication containing tuition rates must be referenced specifically in the catalog. The schedule of charges must be uniformly administered to all categories similarly circumstanced students.

(b) The financial records of the students shall clearly show the charges and dates for the posting of tuition, fees, and other charges; the payments and dates of payment; and the balance after each transaction.

(c) The enrollment agreement or catalog used by an institution must clearly outline the financial obligations of both the institution and the student. When an enrollment agreement is used, the student must receive a copy.

(d) Announcements of changes in tuition or fees must state the effective date of the change and be uniformly administered.

(e) Terms of payment may be varied by the institution so long as the tuition charges are uniformly administered.

The following criteria were previously reviewed by the field and the Council and have been accepted as final, effective January 1, 2008:

C. Faculty, Assignments (Occupational Associate’s Degrees)

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., secretarial studies, medical assisting, business administration, data processing, 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 general education and other academic courses. Instructors at a minimum shall have earned 15 semester or equivalent hours of coursework through a combination of hours from associate’s, bachelor’s, and/or master’s level coursework in the area of their teaching assignment.

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.

(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.
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.

D. Library, Instructional Resources, and Technology
(Academic Associate’s, Bachelor’s, Master’s, and Doctoral Degrees)

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. 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 and the transcript must be translated into English and be evaluated by 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. The professionally trained individual must participate in documented professional growth activities.

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. 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 their government and the transcript must be translated into English and be evaluated by 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. The professionally trained individual must participate in documented professional growth activities.

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 who holds a M.L.S. degree or the equivalent, with special qualifications to aid students in research. 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 their government and the transcript must be translated into English and be evaluated by 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. The professionally trained individual must participate in documented professional growth activities.

3-7-701. Staff.

A professionally trained individual shall supervise and manage library and instructional resources, facilitate their integration into all phases of the institution's curricular and educational offerings, and assist students in their use. A professionally trained individual is one who holds a M.L.S. degree or the equivalent, with special qualifications to aid students in research. 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 their government and the transcript must be translated into English and be evaluated by 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. The professionally trained individual must participate in documented professional growth activities.

II. PROPOSED CRITERIA REVISIONS – COMMENT REQUESTED

A. Faculty Preparation

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. The institution must provide evidence that all faculty members are graduates of institutions accredited by agencies recognized by the United States Department of Education. Faculty who are graduates from institutions outside the United States must be graduates of institutions recognized by their governments and their transcripts must be translated into English and be evaluated by a member of the National Association of Credential Evaluation Services (NACES) to determine the equivalency of the degree credentials to degrees awarded by institutions in the United States.
III. FOR INFORMATION ONLY

A. Guidance on Application of Revised Criterion on Tuition and Charges, Section 3-1-432

On page 3 of this Memorandum to the Field, a revision to Section 3-1-432 of the Accreditation Criteria is described. This revision, approved by the Council at its December 2007 meeting, is a clarification of the criterion on Tuition and Charges and therefore is effective immediately. The revision underscores the prescription that “all charges should be consistent for similarly circumstanced students enrolling at the same time and in the same programs,” and is intended to clarify that, while these charges “must be uniformly administered to similarly circumstanced students,” the charges do not themselves have to be uniform across all categories of students. This criterion applies to situations in which an institution intends to charge one group of similarly circumstanced students a different level of tuition or a different fee from other students who are not similarly circumstanced. These differential charges may include tuition increases, tuition discounts, additional fees, or fee waivers.

When implementing a differential charge for a category of similarly circumstanced students, institutions must comply with all requirements of Section 3-1-432, including the following:

1. The amount of the charge (tuition or fee), including the period for which the student is financially obligated, must be clearly described in the catalog.
2. The specific circumstances under which the charge applies, including the time period for enrolling, the programs that are applicable, and the students who are eligible, must be clearly stated.
3. The process through which the charge will be applied or the discount or waiver may be obtained should be explained.
4. All other stipulations in Section 3-1-432 also apply, including those related to keeping accurate and complete financial records, making clear statements of financial obligations, publishing the effective dates of any changes, and administering all provisions in a uniform manner.

If there are any questions about the applicability or interpretation of this criterion, please feel free to contact Kimberlee Moore at kmoore@acics.org or Tom Wickenden at twickenden@acics.org.

B. ACICS Web Site

The ACICS Web site, ACICS Online, continues to be updated based on Council activities. The site contains revised and detailed information about accreditation, accredited institutions, applications, publications, workshops and special events.

C. Public Participation

The Council encourages institutions to provide feedback regarding Council operations and procedures. In order to assure thorough and careful consideration of constituent requests, please submit all agenda items at least 45 days prior to a Council meeting. Items received less than 45 days prior to a Council meeting may not have sufficient time for review and, therefore, may not be included on the agenda. Council meetings are scheduled every April, August, and December. All materials for review during the April 2008 Council Meeting should be submitted by February 24, 2008.

D. 2008 Workshop Schedule
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<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Location</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accreditation Workshop</td>
<td>Thursday, January 17</td>
<td>Washington, DC</td>
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<tr>
<td>Evaluator Training Workshop</td>
<td>Friday, January 18</td>
<td>Washington, DC</td>
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<td>Deferral Workshop</td>
<td>Thursday, February 7</td>
<td>Washington, DC</td>
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<tr>
<td>Accreditation Workshop</td>
<td>Wednesday, February 27</td>
<td>Washington, DC</td>
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<tr>
<td>Evaluator Training Workshop</td>
<td>Thursday, February 28</td>
<td>Washington, DC</td>
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<td>Adding Value: Retention and Placement</td>
<td>Friday, February 29</td>
<td>Washington, DC</td>
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<tr>
<td>Accreditation Workshop</td>
<td>Thursday, May 1</td>
<td>Washington, DC</td>
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<tr>
<td>Evaluator Training</td>
<td>Friday, May 2</td>
<td>Washington, DC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adding Value: Retention &amp; Placement</td>
<td>Friday, May 2</td>
<td>Washington, DC</td>
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<tr>
<td>Deferral Workshop</td>
<td>Thursday, June 12</td>
<td>Washington, DC</td>
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<tr>
<td>ACICS Annual Meeting</td>
<td>June 23-24</td>
<td>Las Vegas, NV</td>
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**Workshops: Accreditation (2), Evaluator Training, Program Approvals**

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<tr>
<td>Accreditation Workshop</td>
<td>Thursday, September 4</td>
<td>Washington, DC</td>
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<tr>
<td>Evaluator Training Workshop</td>
<td>Friday, September 5</td>
<td>Washington, DC</td>
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<tr>
<td>Adding Value: Distance Education</td>
<td>Friday, September 5</td>
<td>Washington, DC</td>
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<td>Deferral Workshop</td>
<td>Thursday, September 11</td>
<td>Washington, DC</td>
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<td>Chair Training Workshop</td>
<td>Friday, September 26</td>
<td>Washington, DC</td>
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<td>Adding Value: IEP Workshop</td>
<td>Friday, October 3</td>
<td>Washington, DC</td>
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<td>Accreditation Workshop</td>
<td>Thursday, October 16 (TBA)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Evaluator Training Workshop</td>
<td>Friday, October 17 (TBA)</td>
<td>REGIONAL</td>
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<td>Accreditation Workshop</td>
<td>Thursday, October 30</td>
<td>Washington, DC</td>
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<tr>
<td>Evaluator Training/IEP Workshops</td>
<td>Friday, October 31</td>
<td>Washington, DC</td>
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IV. COMMENT FORM – PROPOSED CRITERIA REVISIONS

ACICS ID Code: ___________________________ Date: _____________________________

Name of Organization:  ______________________________________________________

Address:  _________________________________________________________________

Please check (as appropriate):

Proposed Accreditation Criteria revisions:

A. Faculty Preparation   [ ] Accept as Written   [ ] Modify (explain below)

Prepared by:  _______________________________________________________________

Title:  _________________________________________________________________________

Signature:  _________________________________________________________________

Please respond by February 24, 2008, to:

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