



AIRC: THE ASSOCIATION OF INTERNATIONAL ENROLLMENT MANAGEMENT

EDUCATIONAL AGENCY CERTIFICATION STANDARDS

The Educational Agency Certification Standards are monitored by the AIRC Certification Commission and reviewed on a periodic basis as determined by the AIRC Board of Directors. The Certification Standards are stated declaratively and are without instruction on how the educational agency is to respond. The Standards are applied through AIRC's Educational Agency Certification Process, which outlines how educational agencies demonstrate compliance with each of the standards.

Standard 1: Organizational Effectiveness

1.1 Mission and Purposes

Statements of mission and purpose are made public and guide the agency's planning and budgeting, including providing a framework for governance, management and communication. These purposes are further reflected in every aspect of the agency and its activities, organization, and human, financial and physical resources.

1.2 Governance and Ownership

The agency describes in a clear and detailed manner its ownership, governance and organization.

1.3 Effective Management

1.3.1 Decision-Making Process

The agency is sufficiently organized to accomplish its purposes through organizational structure, policies and procedures.

1.3.2 Human Resources

Employees or other people working for or on behalf of the agency are competent, well informed, reputable and act at all times in the best interest of the applicant and institutions.

1.4 Scope of Operation

1.4.1 The agency describes fully all of its activities related to international student recruitment, including its geographic scope.

1.4.2 If recruitment activities are one part of a larger organization with diverse purposes, the agency must describe how the recruitment operations function as a distinctive but fully operational unit within the larger organizational context.

1.4.3 If recruitment activities are carried out by sub-agents, franchisees, or other persons employed or contracted by the agent to transact the whole, or part of the student recruitment process, the agency must describe these relationships.

1.5 Financial Integrity

1.5.1 Financial Sustainability of the Organization/ The agency manages its financial resources to maximize the agency's capability to meet its stated purposes for organizational sustainability.

1.5.2 Nature of Setting and Collecting of Student Fees. The agency has a schedule of fees for services rendered to student clients which is readily understood and visible to all student clients.

1.5.3 Transparent Refund Policy. The agency has a refund policy which is readily understood, publicly posted and visible to all student clients.

1.5.4 Handling of Student Financial Awards. The agency refrains from collecting remuneration from student clients that is conditional upon the receipt of scholarships and financial aid monies of any type awarded by the host or receiving institution, or other scholarship awarding organizations, and is in addition to any remuneration for placement provided by contract with the host institution. This is applicable to all types of scholarships, including academic, merit, athletic, corporate and more (see example listing: <https://www.scholarships.com/financial-aid/collegescholarships/scholarships-by-type/>) An exception to this Standard applies for NCAA Division II and III for amateur student athletes which allow for agent commission payments to be contingent on the award of scholarship provided that the student or guardian consents to this exception.

Standard 2: Integrity of Recruitment Process

2.1 Knowledge of the U.S. Education System

Agency staff have a strong working knowledge of the education system in the United States, as well as of the specific institutional clients they serve.

2.2 Advertising/Marketing

The agency represents itself honestly, claims competency when demonstrable, and avoids misrepresentation.

2.3 Respect for Intellectual Property

The agency uses only authorized material (including logos) from educational institutions.

2.4 Accountability

The agency takes full responsibility for ensuring compliance with AIRC standards with any sub-agents, franchisees, or other persons employed or contracted by the agent to transact the whole, or part of the student recruitment process.

2.5 Conflicts of Interest

The agency manages its relationships with institutions, organizations and students to ensure impartiality and transparency.

2.6 Transparency and Integrity of Services Rendered

The agency conducts itself in a transparent manner in which only truthful claims are made, and both institutions and students are served in an unbiased manner.

2.7 Appropriateness and Accuracy of Services Rendered

2.7.1 The agency remains updated about and follows the instruction of the U.S. Consulate in regard to immigration procedures.

2.7.2 The agency uses current information about institutions and their admissions criteria (including language proficiency), program offerings and their academic prerequisites; rate of graduation, tuition and fees; personal expenses; scholarships; health insurance; calendar and academic support services as well as support services for international students;

housing opportunities; the grounds on which the student's enrollment may be deferred, suspended or discontinued; work opportunities while a student and upon graduation and other matters of importance to the student.

2.7.3 The agency provides accurate information concerning the specific nature of the institution to which a student is being recruited – such as whether study will be at the parent institution; a branch campus in or outside of the United States; by distance education; a joint degree or twinning program outside of the United States, etc.

2.7.4 The agency provides accurate information concerning the nature of the academic qualification/degree being received as per location above and degree level.

2.7.5 The agency provides accurate information related to the transferability of academic credit.

2.7.6 The agency provides accurate and current information concerning the cost of travel to the host institution.

2.7.7 Students who are under the age of 18 in the United States lack many legal rights and need special support. The agency understands the special needs of minor students and provides appropriate services.

Standard 3: Student and Family Engagement Pre- and Post-Enrollment

3.1 Pre-Enrollment

The agency carries out its pre-enrollment services with students and their families characterized by the following:

3.1.1 There is a written legal relationship in the form of a contract or agreement with a readily understood and up-front disclosure of services and related fees.

3.1.2 The agency maintains the confidentiality of records, notes, and client information and discloses confidential information only with written consent from the student on a need-to-know basis.

3.1.3 In the case of students under the age of 18, parents/families are included in the communication process as appropriate and timely.

3.1.4 Promises or guarantees are made by the agency only when backed by facts that they will be achieved.

3.1.5 The agency demonstrates the knowledge that recruitment and admissions in the U.S. educational context are generally prohibited from discrimination based on age, race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, marital status, ethnicity, disability, socioeconomic status, or other reasons.

3.2 Post-Enrollment

The agency carries out its post-enrollment services with students and their families characterized by the following:

3.2.1 The agency keeps individual student records for at least three (3) years for purposes of internal evaluation and external review.

3.2.2 The agency keeps recent (within 3 years) student/family client satisfaction records on file for purposes of external review.

Standard 4: Institutional Engagement Pre- and Post-Recruitment

4.1 Pre-Recruitment

The agency only contracts with or places students at U.S. educational institutions whose accreditation is recognized by the U.S. Department of Education or Council on Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA). Characteristics of these services shall include the following:

4.1.1 There is a written legal relationship in the form of a contract or agreement which clearly states the nature of the partnership, scope of respective roles and responsibilities, quality assurance measures to be implemented and method of monitoring the contractual obligations (such as an annual report to the institution on the results of recruitment practices or other mutually agreed stipulations).

4.1.2 The agency maintains regular contact with institutions which enables consistent and timely communication.

4.1.3 The agency maintains the confidentiality of the relationship between institution and agency as agreed.

4.1.4 The agency provides legitimate documents to institutions which are properly notarized or attested as to their authenticity.

4.1.5 The agency does not knowingly provide false or misleading records of student academic achievement, preparation, and financial capability. Further, the agency ensures that essays and/or statement of purpose are originally created by the student to whom they are attributed.

4.2 Post-Recruitment

4.2.1 The agency keeps recent (within 3 years) institutional client satisfaction records on file for purposes of external review.

Standard 5: Complaints Process

The agency has an internal mechanism for processing complaints and making necessary changes in the nature of recruiting services as needed.

Definition of Terms

Note: The term, "Agency," refers to the entity which seeks certification. The term, "Agent," is any person or an entity working on behalf of the agency.

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