

To: All SEVIS Users

Date: April 7, 2017

Re: Important Message for ACICS Accredited Schools

Number: 1704-01

General Information

On March 15, 2017, the Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP) issued notices to SEVP-certified schools accredited by the Accrediting Council for Independent Colleges and Schools (ACICS) that failed to report the loss of Department of Education (ED)-recognized accreditation as required by 8 CFR 214.3(G)(2). Please refer to your school's notice from SEVP for guidance and respond accordingly.

Per governing regulations at 8 CFR 214.3(b)(2), an SEVP-certified school must either be fully "accredited by a nationally recognized accrediting body," or submit evidence in lieu of accreditation if they are not.

To be fully "accredited by a nationally recognized accrediting body," SEVP only accepts accrediting agencies that are currently recognized by ED for school certification purposes.

On Dec. 12, 2016, ED announced that it no longer recognizes ACICS as an accrediting agency. ED has sent letters to schools saying they will temporarily recognize ACICS-accredited schools so they may continue to receive federal funding for students. However, SEVP can no longer accept ACICS accreditation for certification purposes, as ACICS is no longer a recognized accreditor by ED.

To clarify, all English as a Second Language programs (which are required by Public Law 111-306, The Accreditation of English Language Training Programs Act), must be accredited by a nationally recognized accrediting body. For all other schools and programs, accreditation is not required for SEVP-certification, but they must submit evidence in lieu of accreditation if they are not accredited by an ED-recognized accrediting body.

Regulations require SEVP-certified institutions to report any material changes (like a loss of recognized accreditation) to SEVP within 21 days of the change. Failure to follow this regulation may result in withdrawal of a school's SEVP certification. SEVP recommends that designated school officials review the institution's Form I-17, "Petition for Approval of School for Attendance by Nonimmigrant Student," on a regular basis to ensure it reflects the school's most up-to-date information. As a reminder, when a school submits their signed Form I-17, they are legally agreeing to these terms and conditions.

If you have questions, please contact the SEVP Response Center at 703-603-3400 or 800-892-4829, Monday through Friday, from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. ET, except holidays and Wednesdays from 12:50 to 1:20 p.m. ET.

Comments

To comment on this Broadcast Message, please email SEVP@ice.dhs.gov with “Broadcast Message 1704-01 Comment” entered in the subject line.

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