

To: All SEVIS Users

Date: Dec. 15, 2016

Re: ACICS Loss of Accreditation Recognition

Number: 1612-07

General Information

On Dec. 12, 2016, the U.S. Department of Education (ED) announced that it no longer recognizes the Accrediting Council for Independent Colleges and Schools (ACICS) as an accrediting agency and ED published the [Education Department Establishes Enhanced Federal Aid Participation Requirements for ACICS-accredited Colleges.](#)

This decision affects more than 16,000 international students in the United States attending nearly 130 [Student and Exchange Visitor Program \(SEVP\)-certified schools and programs](#) that are accredited by ACICS.

Most SEVP-certified schools and programs are not required to obtain [accreditation](#) and can provide evidence in lieu of accreditation. However, the following explains when SEVP-certified schools are required to obtain accreditation:

- English as a Second Language (ESL) programs are required accreditation under the [Accreditation of English Language Training Programs Act.](#)
- F-1 students applying for a 24-month science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) optional practical training (OPT) extension [must use a degree from an accredited, SEVP-certified school](#) as the basis of their STEM OPT extension. The school must be accredited at the time the student applies.

ACICS-accredited ESL programs must take action if they wish to remain SEVP-certified and continue enrolling international students.

International students must take action if they are:

- Participating in an ACICS-accredited ESL program.
- Attending an ACICS-accredited school and wanting to participate in STEM OPT in the future.

SEVP is following ED's 18-month timeline for schools and students affected by ACICS' loss of recognition as an accrediting agency.

For more detailed information and guidance, students and schools should visit ICE.gov/SEVP. If you have a case-specific question, please contact the [SEVP Response Center](#).

Comments

To comment on this Broadcast Message, please email SEVP@ice.dhs.gov with “Broadcast Message 1612-07 Comment” entered in the subject line.

Disclaimer

The Broadcast Message is not a substitute for applicable legal requirements, nor is it itself a rule or a final action by SEVP. It is not intended to, does not and may not be relied upon to create any right or benefit, substantive or procedural, enforceable at law by any party in any administrative, civil or criminal matter.