

Date: December 13, 2022

To: Commission and Other Interested Parties

From: Barbara Dunsheath, Policy Committee Chair
Gohar Momjian, ACCJC Vice President

Subject: Policy Changes for Consideration - January 2023 Commission Meeting

The Policy Committee oversees the development of new policies and changes to existing policies. The Policy Committee's work is guided by the *Policy on Commission Practices on Policy Review*.

Commission procedures generally provide that proposed institutional policy revisions and/or new policies be considered by the Commission in a two-meeting process. At the first meeting, new policies/policy changes are discussed, and modifications are made as appropriate (first reading). These policies are then circulated to ACCJC's member institutions and other interested parties for review and comment before presentation at the next scheduled Commission meeting for second reading and adoption.

When revisions are needed in order to align with federal regulations, or for other extenuating circumstances, policy changes can be made by the Commission outside the normal two-meeting process. If these revisions are made by Commission action between regularly scheduled meetings, the changes are communicated to the field, including the reason for immediate action by the Commission.

In addition, the Policy Committee may make edits to policies intended to clarify issues or correct technical issues of language and grammar. The Policy Committee shall notify the Commission of such edits by including a summary of them in its public Policy Memo to the Commission during its regular meeting.

Items for Second Reading

The Policy Committee moved to forward the following policies to the Commission for its Second Read.

i. **Revision: *Policy on Principles of Good Practice in Overseas International Education Programs for Non-U.S. Nationals***

The proposed changes include renaming the policy to *Policy on Principles of Good Practice in Overseas International Education Programs* and provides background context to clarify the applicability of the policy intended for reviewing overseas instructional locations, including branch campuses of member institutions, at which credit-bearing programs are offered to non-U.S. nationals. The policy also adds implementation language instructing institutions to notify the Commission about its

intention to establish an overseas program before it becomes operational to ensure compliance with relevant policies such as the *Policy on Substantive Change* and *Policy on Contractual Relationships with Non-Accredited Institutions*. There are no changes since the Commission's first read in June 2022.

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ii. **Revision: *Policy on Substantive Change***

The proposed change removes a restriction, which currently does not allow colleges to submit a substantive change proposal six months prior to a focused site visit. Removing this barrier will enable colleges to meet their goals consistent with their timeline of implementation and does not impede ACCJC's evaluation of quality when making substantive change decisions. Added policy language also conforms more clearly with federal regulations, defining when an additional location is considered a branch campus, ensuring that the Commission will review long-range planning when an institution proposes a new or additional location, or branch campus, and clarifying circumstances for mandated visits for additional locations.

Since the Commission's first read in June 2022, ACCJC is further modifying the definition of additional locations to include prisons and other correctional facilities if they are participating in title IV, HEA programs. This new language is in accordance with the Department of Education's final rule published November 1, 2022.

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Items for First Reading and Adoption

Per ACCJC Policy on Commission Practices on Policy the Commission can make institutional policy changes outside the normal two-meeting process under exceptional or time sensitive circumstances, when changes are needed in order to align with federal regulations, or for other extenuating circumstances. With the recent submission of ACCJC's recognition report to the Department of Education this summer, the policy committee moved to forward the following policy to the Commission for its First Read and Adoption.

i. **Revision: *Policy on Transfer of Credit***

In the final weeks of preparing its petition for recognition from the US Department of Education, staff identified that ACCJC's *Policy on Transfer of Credit* needs to be strengthened in order to monitor an institution's compliance in accordance with § 668.43(a)(11). This regulation specifies that institutions must publicly disclose transfer of credit policies that include a statement of the institution's current transfer of credit policies and address at a minimum:

- (i) Any established criteria the institution uses regarding the transfer of credit earned at another institution and any types of institutions or sources from which the institution will not accept credits;
- (ii) A list of institutions with which the institution has established an articulation agreement; and

(iii) Written criteria used to evaluate and award credit for prior learning experience including, but not limited to, service in the armed forces, paid or unpaid employment, or other demonstrated competency or learning.

The proposed revisions strengthen ACCJC's *Policy on Transfer of Credit* in conformity with the stated regulations. Further, ACCJC's guides and templates are being revised to ensure that colleges address these policy requirements in their institutional self-evaluations and that peer review teams monitor compliance. ACCJC communicated this impending change in a letter to all institutions in fall 2022, as well as notified the field in its fall 2022 newsletter issue of *ACCJC Connect*.

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