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DEPARTMENT OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS
STATE OF CALIFORNIA

In the Matter of the Automatic Suspension of
Approval to Operate Degree Granting
Programs Directed to:

Case No. BPPE21-718

INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF
CALIFORNIA

DECISION

Bilal M. Rashid, Owner
Institution Code: 60351122
11840 Pierce Street, Ste. 200
Riverside, CA 92505

Appellant.

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INTRODUCTION

Effective January 15, 2022, the Bureau for Private Postsecondary Education (Bureau) automatically suspended the provisional approval to operate degree programs issued to International University of California and its owner (collectively, the University). The Bureau determined that the University was subject to automatic suspension for failing to submit evidence to the Bureau of having achieved accreditation candidacy, pre-accreditation, or full accreditation by the dates prescribed in law.

The Director of the Department of Consumer Affairs received from the University a timely appeal of the Bureau's suspension order. The Director, or her designee, is required to hear such appeals at an informal office conference. (Cal. Code Regs., tit. 5, § 71410, subd. (b).)

An informal office conference was held on February 18, 2022, before the Director's designee, Deputy Director Ryan Marcroft. Bilal M. Rashid, the University's owner, and Kevin Grant, appeared on behalf of the University. Joanna Murray, Senior Education Specialist and Ebony Santee, Licensing Chief, appeared on behalf of the Bureau. At the conclusion of the informal office conference, the matter was submitted for a final decision.

1 After considering the evidence and argument submitted by the University and the Bureau,
2 the Bureau's order is AFFIRMED.

3 **FACTUAL AND PROCEDURAL BACKGROUND**

4 The University was provisionally approved on November 9, 2016, to offer two degree
5 programs: a Master of Arts in Management and a Master of Business Administration.

6 The Education Code requires such institutions to meet certain accreditation benchmarks
7 in order to maintain approval. They must submit to the Bureau evidence of having achieved
8 accreditation candidacy or pre-accreditation within two years of the provisional approval, and
9 evidence of having achieved full accreditation within five years of provisional approval. (Ed.
10 Code, § 94885.5, subd. (b)(3).) Accordingly here, the University was required to submit
11 evidence to the Bureau of having achieved accreditation candidacy or pre-accreditation by
12 November 9, 2018, and full accreditation by November 9, 2021. The Bureau must suspend an
13 institution's provisional approval if it does not meet the accreditation deadlines. (Ed. Code, §
14 94885.5, subd. (c).)

15 The University planned to pursue accreditation through the Distance Education
16 Accrediting Commission (DEAC). On September 10, 2018, two months before the University
17 should have been pre-accredited, a visiting committee of the Bureau presented to the University
18 a report regarding its lack of accreditation progress. At that time, the Bureau found that the
19 University made little progress toward accreditation, would be unable to meet accreditation
20 goals, and it recommended that the University “[e]xpediently pursue the next steps to reach
21 pre-accreditation and ultimately full accreditation” (Bureau Ex. 6 [Visiting Comm. Report],
22 p. 2.)

23
24 Nonetheless, the record shows no progress toward accreditation between September 2018
25 and November 9, 2018, the date by which the University should have been pre-accredited. And
26 despite multiple contacts by the Bureau, the University also made little or no progress toward
27 accreditation in 2019 and most of 2020.
28

1 In November 2020, the University submitted an accreditation application to DEAC.

2 On May 7, 2021, six months before the University should have been fully accredited, it
3 requested for the first time an extension of the statutory accreditation deadlines. Education Code
4 section 94885.5, subdivision (d)(2) provides that institutions must submit to the Bureau with an
5 extension request: (1) an amended accreditation plan; (2) evidence of active steps the institution
6 is taking to become accredited; and, (3) documentation from an accrediting agency
7 demonstrating that the institution is likely to become accredited. The University's request
8 included information about steps it took toward accreditation, but lacked an amended
9 accreditation plan and documentation from DEAC demonstrating that the University was likely
10 to become accredited. Consequently, on May 10, 2021, the Bureau notified the University that
11 its extension request was incomplete and would not be granted.
12

13 On June 4, 2021, DEAC determined that the University was ineligible for accreditation
14 and declined to accept its November 2020 application.

15 The record shows little progress toward accreditation between May 2021 and November
16 2021. And as of November 9, 2021, the date when the University should have been fully
17 accredited, it was not pre-accredited, fully accredited, nor had it submitted a complete extension
18 request to the Bureau to extend the time to achieve either accreditation benchmark.

19 In December 2021, the University submitted an accreditation application and application
20 fee to DEAC. It also submitted a late request to the Bureau to extend time to achieve
21 accreditation that included information about steps the University took toward accreditation and
22 a revised accreditation plan. The revised plan projected that the University would be accredited
23 in 2026. The University did not include information from DEAC demonstrating the University's
24 likely ability to become accredited.

25 At hearing, the University acknowledged that it made little accreditation progress
26 throughout most of the time from 2016 to 2021, but stated that it made progress since October
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1 [¶] . . . [¶]

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3 (3) The institution shall provide evidence of accreditation candidacy or pre-accreditation
4 within two years of issuance of its provisional approval to operate degree programs, and
5 evidence of accreditation within five years of issuance of its provisional approval to
6 operate degree programs, with the scope of that accreditation covering the offering of at
7 least one degree program.

8 Accreditation candidacy and pre-accreditation are defined to mean that the institution
9 “submitted a completed application for initial accreditation with the required fee, which was
10 accepted by the accreditor.” (Cal. Code Regs., tit. 5, § 70000, subd. (s).)

11 An institution that does not submit evidence to the Bureau of having achieved
12 accreditation candidacy, pre-accreditation, or full accreditation by the specified dates

13 shall have its provisional approval to operate degree programs automatically suspended
14 on the applicable date. The bureau shall issue an order suspending the institution’s degree
15 programs and that suspension shall not be lifted until the institution complies with the
16 requirements of this section or has its accreditation reinstated.

17 (Ed. Code, § 94885.5, subd. (c)(1); see also Cal. Code Regs., tit. 5, § 71410, subd. (a).)

18 A suspended institution must cease enrolling students, provide the Bureau with a degree-
19 program closure plan within 30 days, and provide notice of the suspension to currently-enrolled
20 students within five days. (Ed. Code, § 94885.5, subd. (c)(1); Cal. Code. Regs., tit. 5, § 74250,
21 subds. (a), (b).)

22 Institutions may request to extend the time for achieving pre-accreditation or full
23 accreditation, and the Bureau will grant such requests upon timely submission of sufficient
24 evidence that an institution made “strong progress” toward obtaining accreditation. (Ed. Code, §
25 94885.5, subd. (d).) Evidence of strong progress includes an amended accreditation plan that
26 explains why pre-accreditation, accreditation candidacy, or full accreditation were not achieved,
27 active steps the institution took toward accreditation, and documentation from an accrediting
28 agency demonstrating that the institution is likely to become accredited. (*Ibid.*)

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DISCUSSION

The University was provisionally approved to offer degree programs on November 9, 2016. Pursuant to Education Code section 94885.5, it was required to achieve accreditation candidacy or pre-accreditation two years later, by November 9, 2018, and full accreditation within five years, by November 9, 2021. The University did not, however, submit evidence to the Bureau of having met either of the statutory deadlines. It did not demonstrate by November 9, 2018, November 9, 2021, or even by the date of the informal office conference on February 18, 2022, that it was pre-accredited—i.e., that it submitted to an appropriate accrediting body “a completed application for initial accreditation with the required fee,” or that an accrediting body accepted the application and fee. (Cal. Code Regs., tit. 5, § 70000, subd. (s).) Likewise, the University did not demonstrate that it achieved full accreditation.

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The University also showed little overall progress toward achieving accreditation during the five years since it was provisionally approved in 2016. Indeed, it showed little progress during the first four years, even though the Bureau warned in September 2018 that the University should “[e]xpeditiously pursue the next steps to reach pre-accreditation and ultimately full accreditation” (Bureau Ex. 6 [Visiting Comm. Report], p. 2.) It did not even submit a request to extend the accreditation deadlines until two and half years *after it missed* the pre-accreditation deadline. The University made some progress in November 2020 when it submitted an accreditation application to DEAC. But when the Bureau notified the University in May 2021 that its extension request was incomplete and would not be granted—six months before the full accreditation deadline—the University still did not submit a revised extension request until December 2021, more than one month *after it missed* the full accreditation deadline. And even then, its request to extend time was again incomplete, because it did not include evidence from DEAC that the University was likely to become pre-accredited or accredited. (Ed. Code, § 94885.5, subd. (d).)

1 As discussed, an institution that does not submit evidence to the Bureau of having
2 achieved accreditation candidacy, pre-accreditation, or full accreditation within the prescribed
3 times “shall have its provisional approval to operate degree programs automatically suspended
4 on the applicable date. The bureau shall issue an order suspending the institution’s degree
5 programs and that suspension shall not be lifted until the institution complies with the
6 requirements of this section or has its accreditation reinstated.” (Ed. Code, § 94885.5, subd.
7 (c)(1).) Since the University did not satisfy any of the statutory accreditation deadlines, and did
8 not submit a timely, complete or meritorious request to extend the deadlines, the Bureau
9 appropriately suspended the University’s approval to operate degree programs.
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11 The University did not present evidence that DEAC accepted its application for initial
12 accreditation and fee, or evidence that it was accredited. Accordingly, the University did not
13 demonstrate that it achieved accreditation candidacy, pre-accreditation, or full accreditation by
14 the statutory deadlines.

15 **DECISION**

16 The Bureau’s Order Suspending Approval to Operate Degree Granting Programs is
17 AFFIRMED.

18
19 DATED

April 4, 2022



RYAN MARCROFT
Deputy Director
Legal Affairs Division
Department of Consumer Affairs