



July 1, 2016

The Bureau for Private Postsecondary Education (Bureau) is writing to alert you that the Accrediting Council for Independent Colleges and Schools (ACICS), one of the nation's largest accreditors, is at risk of losing its recognition by the Department of Education (Department) pursuant to 34 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 602, based on the following recent and foreseeable events:

- On or about June 14, 2016, Department staff recommended to the Senior Department Official (SDO) at the Department and the National Advisory Committee on Institutional Quality and Integrity (NACIQI) that ACICS's petition for renewal of recognition by the Department be denied for several reasons.
- On June 23, 2016, NACIQI voted to recommend to the Department that re-recognition be denied.
- The ultimate decision will come from the SDO at the Department within 90 days from June 23, 2016, or by September 21, 2016, but it may come earlier.
- If the Department decides to deny re-recognition, ACICS will have the opportunity to appeal the decision to the Secretary of Education. If ACICS appeals the decision, the loss of recognition will be stayed during the appeal, but there is no set timeframe for when a decision on the appeal must be made, and the Bureau has no knowledge at this time regarding whether ACICS intends to appeal to the Secretary.

Here are four links to detailed information regarding the above from the Department:

Full Office of Postsecondary Education staff report:

<https://opeweb.ed.gov/aslweb/finalstaffreports.cfm>

Blog: <http://blog.ed.gov/2016/06/college-accreditation-changes-mean-students/>

FAQ: <http://www2.ed.gov/admins/finaid/accred/faqs-accrediting-agencies.doc>

Infographic: <http://www2.ed.gov/admins/finaid/accred/accreditor-federal-recognition-process-steps.pdf>

### **What does this mean for your school's approval to operate in California?**

The Bureau's records indicate that your institution is Approved By Means of Accreditation (ABMA), with your accreditor listed as ACICS. This means that your ABMA is dependent on ACICS's continued ability to accredit your school as an accrediting agency recognized by the United States Department of Education. See, the California Private Postsecondary Education Act of 2009 (Act), Education Code sections 94890, 94813, and 94814.

Accordingly, **ACICS's loss of recognition by the Department will remove the basis for the institution's accreditation status, and the Bureau may have to initiate proceedings to revoke your school's ABMA.**

However, the Bureau will currently accept applications for full approval from your institution or alternatively, applications for ABMA with a new accreditor. If your school has no degree granting programs, you may apply for full approval; even if your school has degree granting programs, you may still apply for full approval, but ultimately will have to comply with the requirement for institutional accreditation. The Bureau cannot guarantee that the applications will be granted or processed prior to the potential loss of ACISC's recognition by the Department. The Bureau does not waive its right to move for emergency relief to restrict enrollment or for other relief pursuant to the Act and regulations.

**What information does the Bureau require from you?**

This is an unprecedented situation, and the Bureau is currently analyzing and processing the issues to address the situation and to do all it can to protect students from potential harm. As part of the process, and because the Bureau has a mandate to protect students and ensure minimum operating standards at your institution, it requires the following information from you. Please complete the attached pages, make a copy for your records if you wish, and return the document to the Bureau.

**How can you get more information from the Bureau about this situation?**

The Bureau will be hosting a stakeholder meeting on Thursday, July 14, 2016, at 1:00 pm in Sacramento (see details below). The meeting will include a one-hour informational session followed by a licensing workshop (if institutions express enough interest in the workshop). This is a public meeting and everyone is encouraged to attend. The intent is to provide information and gather input from stakeholders through an open discussion concerning this situation.

**Topic:** ACICS

**Date and Time:** Thursday, July 14, 2016, at 1:00 pm through 6:00 pm (depending on interest in licensing workshop).

**Location:** 1625 N Market Blvd., Room 102 South, Sacramento, CA 95834 (DCA HQ Hearing Room, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor)

We appreciate your assistance with this process. If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact me at the telephone number and email address below.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Joanne Wenzel', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Joanne Wenzel  
Chief, Bureau for Private Postsecondary Education  
(916) 431-6905  
[Joanne.Wenzel@dca.ca.gov](mailto:Joanne.Wenzel@dca.ca.gov)

**PLEASE COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING AND RETURN BY JULY 8, 2016 TO:**

**Bureau for Private Postsecondary Education**

2535 Capitol Oaks Dr., Suite 400

Sacramento, CA 95833 Attention: Richie Barnard

***OR by US. Postal Service at:***

P.O. Box 980818

West Sacramento, CA 95798-0810 Attention: Richie Barnard

***OR by email at:*** [Richie.Barnard@dca.ca.gov](mailto:Richie.Barnard@dca.ca.gov)

1. Was the institution aware of ACICS's potential loss of recognition by the Department prior to this letter? Please circle one: YES NO.
2. Has the institution made a decision to seek accreditation with another accreditor recognized by the Department? Please circle one: YES NO.
  - If YES, which accreditor? \_\_\_\_\_.
  - If YES, has the institution applied to the other accreditor yet? Please circle one: YES NO.
  - If YES, please list the steps the institution has taken toward accreditation and the dates of those steps: \_\_\_\_\_.
3. Does the institution currently provide any degree granting programs? Please circle one: YES NO.
  - If YES, please indicate how many: \_\_\_\_\_.
4. Does the institution currently offer any programs where graduates need to have graduated from an accredited school recognized by the Department for licensure in the particular profession?
  - If YES, please indicate the programs or attach an additional sheet with the programs listed: \_\_\_\_\_.
5. Please provide a copy of your school's most recent student roster for each location. Please indicate the students name, program, contact information, enrollment date and expected graduation date. (Electronic or hard copy.)
6. Does your institution intend to send a representative to the Bureau's stakeholder meeting planned for Tuesday, July 14, 2016? Please circle one: YES NO.
  - If YES, please indicate your interest in attending the licensing workshop portion of the meeting from approximately 2 pm – 6 pm. Please circle one: YES NO.
  - IF YES, please indicate any specific questions that you would like the Bureau to address at the informational session and/or licensing workshop:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.