

More Fallout from ACICS Loss of Recognition – SEVP Removes Grace Period

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Reversing its earlier position, the Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP) has announced that schools accredited by the Accrediting Council for Independent Colleges and Schools (ACICS) will not have 18-months to obtain accreditation from another accreditor recognized by the US Department of Education to maintain SEVP certification. The action will immediately impact English-language programs, which must cease enrolling new F-1 students and will lose SEVP approval if institutions offering such programs are not able to demonstrate they have accreditation from a Department of Education-recognized accreditor by April 24, 2017. For all other programs, affected schools must either secure alternative accreditation or demonstrate that credits from each certified program are fully accepted by three other institutions that are accredited by a federally-recognized accrediting agency by that date.

When the Department of Education first announced in December 2016 that it would no longer recognize ACICS as an accrediting agency, SEVP issued a statement that it would “follow the Department of Education’s timeline for schools and students affected by ACICS’s loss of recognition as an accreditor.” SEVP went on to expressly state that “schools accredited by ACICS have 18 months to find a different accreditor for their programs.”

SEVP recently announced that it has “updated its previous guidance,” reversing its position and issuing new guidance, and has started issuing notices to ACICS accredited schools with a deadline to demonstrate they meet SEVP’s accreditation requirements. All schools that are currently accredited by ACICS have until the due date on the SEVP notice to inform SEVP that the school has found a new federally-recognized accreditor or can provide SEVP with evidence that their credits are accepted unconditionally by three other institutions. Note that for continued certification to enroll SEVP students in English-language training programs the institution must secure alternative accreditation.

SEVP is staying with its earlier policy that F-1 and M-1 students currently enrolled at ACICS schools will have 18 months to finish their current programs, regardless of whether the institution can meet the accreditation or alternative evidence requirements.

The full updated SEVP announcement is at on the [ICE website](#), and an archived version of the SEVP website with its previous language regarding the grace period available for reference can be found [here](#).

We will provide more information as it becomes available.

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