



## **AEI User's Guide to Applying for Initial and Reaccreditation Accreditation**

**Purpose:** The purpose of this guide is to provide instructions, directions, examples, suggestions, as to how to best write and assemble an application for initial accreditation or reaccreditation to the ACS Program for Accreditation of Education Institutes.

**Goal:** The goal of the User's guide is to provide just in time answers/solutions to questions that may occur as an AEI is putting together an application for submission to the ACS. The other goal is that the User's guide may be viewed as also a resource guide when new questions come up within the day-to-day operations of an AEI.

**Living Document:** Staff looks at this User's Guide as a "wiki" of sorts, and therefore encourage AEIs to share their documents, forms, examples, or strategies with other AEIs as to how they were able to demonstrate compliance with Standards and Criteria of the AEI Program.

**Disclaimer:** This document is provided for information and guidance purposes only to applicants for accreditation and reaccreditation. By reading and or using any of the suggestions is not an endorsement that an applicant will be guaranteed accreditation.

**Eligibility Requirements:** What does an Education Institute need to do or have in place to apply for accreditation? If you have questions about whether or not you meet any of the eligibility requirements, please contact ACS AEI staff.

1. Have a track record of offering education at one's center
2. Be able to demonstrate what is currently in place, not what will be done in the future if accredited (NOTE: for institutes applying for accreditation or reaccreditation in 2013, some flexibility may be provided for new requirements)
3. Have the appropriate amount of space based on which type of accreditation level one's center is applying for, Comprehensive or Focused
4. Institution/Center must have an accreditation with one of the following organizations: LCME, ACGME, ACCME, Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada, or appropriate international organization
5. Cannot be a commercial entity

## **Hints and Thoughts to Consider on How to Address each Standard and Criteria**

Spirit and Letter of the Law – At the beginning of each Standard, we have provided a number of bullet points to help set the intention/spirit of what we want an AEI to be able to demonstrate for each criterion. We've also tried to assure that within each criterion, the letter of the law "maps" back to the spirit in order to provide a complete representation of what AEIs should and need to do to be in compliance.

### ***Standard I – Learner and Scope of Educational Programs***

#### Criterion 1.1

- For this criterion we want to know exactly who your various learner groups are.
- We are interested in knowing what the total percentage for each group you identify, and this is based on all the courses you've identified in your list of activities, which is required.
- Please note there is no right or wrong answer in terms of the specific percentages that the surveyors and reviewers are looking for.
- They are more interested in getting a sense of who your AEI mainly serves as a learner. If your AEI has "others" as a learner group, please specify who these groups are.

#### Criterion 1.2

- This criterion is pretty straight forward and requires that you do two things to demonstrate compliance.
- The first is to provide a complete list of the activities through the List of Activities table.
- The second is to tell us about the types of programs (educational offerings) that your AEI offers that address the core competencies in the cognitive, psychomotor and affective and team training domains.

#### Criterion 1.3

- This criterion is pretty cut and dry. We are looking for the AEI to acknowledge what type of accreditation it has or the organization where the AEI is housed or affiliated with.
- The purpose of wanting to know which accreditation bodies the AEI has a relationship with provides added demonstration that the AEI has a program that meets educational standards and has successfully completed a rigorous process to achieve accreditation.

### ***Standard II – Curriculum Development, Delivery of Effective Education, and Assessment***

#### Criterion 2.1 (for FEIs)

- If your AEI is using a pre-existing curriculum are you using their objectives or does your AEI have its own objectives for the content?
- The second part of this criterion is the proof.
- What evidence can you provide that demonstrates the curriculum used was developed using the five bullet points outlined in Criterion 2.1?
- Your AEI has to show an actual final product that demonstrates all five bullet points.
- We don't need the entire curriculum, only those pieces that show the needs/gap analysis, the objectives, the evaluation, and so on.

### Criterion 2.1.1 (for CEIs)

- This criterion is about how an AEI demonstrates that it is an innovative entity.
- The Revisions Committee thought one way to demonstrate innovation was through the development of original curriculum, in other words, create your own curriculum for something that your AEI teaches.
- The language for the criterion states that the AEI will develop “some” original curriculum. The question becomes what is the “number” that represents “some”. The Revisions Committee gave this a lot of thought and believe that it would be reasonable that during a period of accreditation, which is 3 years, that at least 1 original curriculum would be developed in-house, or “home grown” so to speak, and that the curriculum would be provided to show where in process it is; whether it be a continuing process of development for a new curriculum created at the AEI or that it is a curriculum that is starting from “scratch” would be appropriate evidence of innovation.
- It should be noted that as the curriculum is being worked on at the AEI demonstrates the use of the five points outlined in Criterion 2.1.2

### Criterion 2.1.2 (for CEIs, Criterion 2.1 for FEIs)

- This criterion is about the process used to develop curriculum.
- We want you to describe the process. An easy way to describe it is to incorporate each bullet into your description. In other words when you are describing your development of your curriculum or the modification of a pre-existing curriculum, first talk about the needs or gap analysis, why you are developing this content.
- What does your AEI require as proof from the faculty that are developing the curriculum or modifying an off the shelf curriculum as to why this curriculum has to be developed?
- Then talk about objectives. Does your AEI require that an original curriculum or modified curriculum to have objectives? Do the objectives have to be written in a behavioral format, and so on for each bullet point?
- If your AEI is using a pre-existing curriculum are you using their objectives or does your AEI have its own objectives for the content?
- The second part of this criterion is the proof. What evidence can you provide that demonstrates that there is a process in place that everyone follows when designing their own curriculum or modifying someone else’s curriculum?
- Does your AEI utilize a curriculum development template, if so, include it.
- Finally, your AEI has to show an actual final product (an original curriculum or a modified curriculum) that demonstrates all five bullet points.
- We don’t need the entire curriculum, only those pieces that show the needs/gap analysis, the objectives, the evaluation, and so on.
- Remember that out of your two examples, one must be a surgical curriculum or course, and if not your AEI will be found to be in partial compliance by the surveyor(s) and reviewer.

### Criterion 2.2.1

- Institutes are expected to have a process for educating faculty and instructors to support effective simulation teaching in the curricula being taught.

- “Offering faculty development programs and/or courses” does not require AEs to develop their own faculty development programs and/or courses (though this is perfectly acceptable); rather, AEs may meet this criterion by ensuring their faculty attend or participate in faculty development programs or courses offered by the parent Institution, another AE, or other reputable organization.

#### Criterion 2.2.2

- What mechanism does your AE have in place to ensure that for every curriculum taught the appropriate training devices, simulation systems, advanced technologies or other teaching techniques are used?
- Are there currently curricula in place that may perhaps not use the appropriate devices because there hasn't been any type of review or analysis to ensure the curriculum and devices adequately match?

#### Criterion 2.3

- For this criterion, an AE is expected to evaluate the effectiveness of the education and training provided through the assessment of curricular goals and objectives, education and training methods, faculty effectiveness, learner acquisition of knowledge and/or skills. In other words, how do you know that what was taught was worth teaching?
- Is there a threshold that has been established for each category of assessment by which if the threshold for that category is met nothing is changed; however, if the category doesn't meet the threshold is the curriculum modified for the next time?
- Additionally, doing this type of evaluation of the effectiveness of the education and training is a great way to report to the Steering Committee/Advisory Board which is required through Criterion 3.6 to assist the AE staff in making strategic decisions about the type of education/curriculum offered at the AE.

### ***Standard III – Administration, Management, and Governance***

#### Criterion 3.1

- For this criterion it is pretty cut and dry with regards to answer each bullet point asked in the criterion.
- What has emerged over the last several years is the fact that many of the AEs that are becoming accredited or are currently accredited are now multiple sites or have multiple spaces not necessarily in the same building, but are on the same campus, it is important that the AE describe each site/space relationship to each other, along with what individual or entity oversees all space, and what access do learners have to each space.

### Criterion 3.2

- There are three sub-criterion under Criterion 3.2, all of which deal with personnel.
- It should be noted that if there is a case where one person holds multiple roles within the structure of the AEI, for example, the AEI Director (25%) is also the Surgical Director (10%), then that person must have total protected time equal to each individual role's required protected time combined.
- So with our example, the person that holds multiple roles will need to demonstrate that 35% of his/her time is devoted to the AEI.

#### Criterion 3.2.1

- For the Education Institute Director, this position does not have to be a surgeon or a physician; however, if the person is an administrative type person, there needs to be a way to demonstrate that this person is has educational qualifications.
- By that we mean has to have a formal training in education or has a teaching portfolio of prior teaching experience and competence.
- Staff would like to explore this description a little more to find out do we mean that this person has to have a PhD in education? Is a Master's in Education acceptable? What if this person for example is a MSN, but has clearly taught for 20 years and has a portfolio of what they've taught. Does this description preclude this person from being the director because the degree is not in education?

#### Criterion 3.2.2

- For the Education Institute Surgical Director, the AEI has to be able to demonstrate how the Surgical Director meets each of the noted bullet points.
- Most of the bullets are self-explanatory; however, staff would like to explore two specifically, "must have responsibilities for the institute's surgical activities". What does this look like, does it mean that the Surgical Director approves all surgical curriculum that is taught? That the Surgical Director is just the overseer and has no formal involvement in the curriculum that is taught?
- The second bullet point that needs further clarification for this guide is what do we mean by a "commitment to surgical education?" Do we mean that the Surgical Director has to be a current faculty person for the AEI? Does this mean that the Surgical Director has to have so many years of documented teaching? It's a vague enough that it would be helpful to describe what we mean by this statement.
- For the last bullet point, "responsible for reporting to the Steering Committee or Advisory Board of assessments related to surgical education and training activities". This bullet point is tied to Criterion 2.3 which requires the evaluation of the assessment data and Criterion 3.6 which is the requirement of the reporting of the data to the Steering Committee. So if the Surgical Director is on the Steering Committee and brings the assessment data to be discussed then this bullet point of this criterion will have been met.

### Criterion 3.2.3

- This criterion stipulates that to meet the 1.5 FTE requirements there must be two individuals that have a minimum of 0.5 FTE.
- List in the bullet points is only but a small fraction of the job responsibilities of what the Administrative and Support Staff perform.
- For multiple individuals filling the requirements for 3.2.3 only one letter is required, as long as the letter is provided by a superior who oversees all individuals who perform the noted functions.
- We are aware that there are often shared staffing models that demonstrate multiple people added together equal an FTE. What would be important to show in an application is the breakdown by individuals and their percentage of time and their specific responsibilities that go towards meeting the 1.5 FTE requirements.
- Staff has two questions related to this criterion. “What do we mean by acquisition of the assessment data related to Criterion 2.3”? Is the Administrative and Support person supposed to do the actual “crunching” of the numbers from the evaluation forms completed from each learner related to assessing the various curriculum taught? What is the expectation of the “policies and procedures manuals”?
- We understand that the policies and procedures manuals will not be included in the application; however, what do we want the surveyors to do when they get on-site?
- Does the AEI have to produce their own policies and procedures manual? Can the AEI use the institution’s policies and procedures as their reference in terms of how they operate their center?

### Criterion 3.3

- An AEI will provide a list of the devices to meet the learners’ and curricular needs. This will be presented in a table in which the AEI lists each device and also lists which curriculum utilizes that device.
- Staff comment: The question will come up what do we mean by “and have the support to use them effectively”. Do we mean that faculty “have support to use them effectively”? Do we mean has technical support so that the devices can be used effectively? Do we mean both types of support? Or is there something else missing that would address “and have the support to use them effectively”?

### Criterion 3.4

- For this criterion the application is providing budget tables to be completed for the three years required. In addition, this criterion states what should be included in the letter(s) of support. What is important is that the letter should be from the most senior individual responsible for the financial support of the AEI.

### Criterion 3.5

- This criterion is about the AEI providing a statement of what its mission is in terms of educating its learners. In other words, why does the AEI do what it does?
- This criterion has not stipulated the length of the mission statement or the style/format of how that information is conveyed in the application.
- We are trying to be sensitive to cultural issues in terms of how this information is presented.

### Criterion 3.6

- This criterion describes that each AEI must have a body that oversees and assists those that run the day-to-day functions of the Institute. The criterion specifically describes what functions need to be performed by the AEI and this is stipulated in the application.
- Documenting how the Steering Committee/Advisory Board carries out their obligations as described in this criterion is the key to demonstrate compliance.

### Criterion 3.7

- This criterion is all about the organizational structure of the AEI.
- Does the organization chart clearly illustrate the relationships between the key components/players such as the Steering Committee/Advisory Board, Institute Director, Institutional (umbrella organization) over sight, the stakeholders, and component sites/locations that comprise the institute?
- Does the organizational chart demonstrate that the AEI and its parts are acting in concert and not appearing as silos with no coordination or single over sight.
- Also, what is clear is to include the names of the individuals along with their titles.
- It would be helpful to use the titles as described in Criterion 3.2 in the organization chart as to highlight the key people in the AEI.

### Criterion 3.8

- As a part of the application for accreditation or reaccreditation each AEI will be asked to sign off on the terms and conditions document.

## ***Standard IV – Advancement of the Field***

### Criterion 4.1

- This criterion provides flexibility for the AEI to demonstrate that it is in fact advancing the field of simulation-based surgical education.
- There are five bullet points (examples) provided, but this does not mean that other avenues of advancing the field do not exist.
- It is however, the expectation of the program that each AEI is pursuing at least one type of research or scholarly activity, and this will need to be documented in the application.

#### Criterion 4.2

- The goal of this criterion is to have every AEI participate in Consortium activities.
- One of the clear needs that staff has heard is there is a need to share knowledge and best practices amongst Consortium members.
- Therefore this criterion is encouraging AEIs to attend, present, share, publish articles, serve as faculty at committee workshops, and serve as members on committees.
- As such, the application will ask for documentation as to how your AEI participated in advancing the field.

#### Tables

For the table label Activity Information for the Last 12 Months, how should we count a person who attends a course? An encounter is viewed as a person per course. For example, a practicing surgeon attended five activities over the last year, that surgeons should be counted once for each activity.