



## Accreditation Manual 2026

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ACCREDITATION HANDBOOK 2026

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## INTRODUCTION

ICAITS exists to assure Learners of high-quality Transformative Learning by (1) elevating accountability and transparency of its institutions, (2) encouraging innovation and disruption in higher education systems for continuous improvement, and (3) empowering sustainable models for Transformative Higher Learning.

ICAITS works to fulfill these three major goals through meeting six objectives:

1. Promoting high quality transformative education through the development and implementation of policies, procedures, and standards for assessing educational effectiveness for quality and continuous improvement.
2. Ensuring the consistent application of standards, accreditation requirements, and federal requirements
3. Providing an accreditation process that fosters ongoing institutional self-study and continuous improvement
4. Providing guidance for quality and growth to aspiring and established institutions
5. To facilitate and promote cooperation between likeminded institutions with shared core philosophies and commitments
6. Ensuring Learners, the general public, authorizing agencies, and other stakeholders that institutions accredited by ICAITS have:
  - o Defined, appropriate, and transparently communicated educational objectives and outcomes
  - o Appropriate conditions in which educational outcomes are being fulfilled
  - o Sustainable organizational models, including staffing and support
  - o A reliable expectation of continuing to provide high quality transformative education into the foreseeable future

To fulfill these major goals and objectives ICAITS has established **Ten Standards for Accreditation** against which institutions applying for initial accreditation and those seeking to continue accreditation are evaluated. Institutions are required to maintain the Standards at all times, along with all additional Federal and State Requirements, and are accountable at regular reporting times to provide evidence of their performance in meeting these standards.

## ICAITS STANDARDS FOR ACCREDITATION

The Standards reflect and quantify the ICAITS commitment to:

1. Accountability and Transparency – advancing institutional quality and credibility.
2. Innovation and Disruption – facilitating continuous improvement.
3. Empowering Sustainable Models – promoting access to higher education.

To ensure that institutions are upholding these commitments, institutions are required to continually monitor their performance against the Standards, in order to show ongoing compliance and continuous improvement. ICAITS bases its accrediting determinations solely on the institution's actual compliance in meeting the Standards for Accreditation.

The ICAITS Standards for Accreditation are (with number of Required Evidences after each Standard):

Standard 1 – Shared Core Philosophies and Commitments (2)

Standard 2 – Mission and Objectives (3)

Standard 3 – Integrity and Policies (7)

Standard 4 – Authority to Operate (14)

Standard 5 – Governance and Organizational Structure (4)

Standard 6 – Planning and Effectiveness (5)

Standard 7 – Finance and Operations (10)

Standard 8 – Enrollment Management (25)

Standard 9 – Academics (17)

Standard 10 – Learner Success (5)

*Total Standards: 10 / Total Evidences: 92*

### **STANDARD 1 – SHARED CORE PHILOSOPHIES AND COMMITMENTS**

The Core Philosophies and Commitments of an institution reflect its commitment to the Biblical worldview. Institutions are not required to duplicate the ICAITS Core Philosophies and Commitments statement, but the institution must have a statement of its core commitment to the Biblical worldview, and that statement should align fully with the ICAITS Core Philosophies and Commitments Statement. The statement should be clear, so as to effectively inform prospective learners, faculty, administrators, Board members, other internal and external stakeholders, and the general public regarding the worldview commitment of the institution.

#### **Core Accountabilities**

##### *1.1 Affirmation and Publication of Shared Core Philosophies and Commitments*

*The institution has a Statement of Core Philosophies and Commitments, or a Statement of Faith, which agrees with the ICAITS Core Philosophies and Commitments statement, and which is readily available in appropriate official publications.*

##### *1.2 Review and Approval of Core Philosophy and Commitments Statement*

*The Ownership or Board of the institution periodically reviews and approves the institution's Statement of Core Philosophies and Commitments, or Statement of Faith.*

### **STANDARD 2 – MISSION AND OBJECTIVES**

The **mission** and **objectives** of an institution are fundamental elements that guide its direction, operations, and effectiveness. Transparency and clarity in the communication of the mission and objectives are paramount to the health of an institution.

#### **Core Accountabilities**

##### *2.1 Statement and Publication of the Mission*

*The institution has a Mission Statement that serves as an accurate and comprehensive guide for the institution's scope and operations, and which is readily available in appropriate official publications.*

##### *2.2 Review and Approval of the Mission*

*The Ownership or Board of the institution periodically reviews and approves the institution's Mission.*

##### *2.3 Institutional Objectives*

*The institution has clearly defined and published Institutional Objectives which are consistent with the institution's stated mission, are measurable, and are periodically reviewed and approved by the institution's Ownership or Board.*

### STANDARD 3 – INTEGRITY AND POLICIES

Integrity is critically important to ICAITS as a reflection of godly conduct and of trustworthy engagement with all stakeholders, and as an underpinning of institutional credibility, function, and educational mission. It is the basic expectation of every institution and is generally exhibited through transparency.

#### Core Accountabilities

##### 3.1 Name

*The name of the institution is appropriate for its mission and is fitting for the programs offered.*

##### 3.2 Integrity and Reputation

*The institution demonstrates integrity in its operations and is represented accurately and honestly to learners, internal and external stakeholders, the general public, and to ICAITS. The institution's name is free from any association with any activity that might be harmful to the reputation of ICAITS accrediting processes, including but not limited to illegalities, fraud, unethical conduct, and mistreatment of constituents.*

##### 3.3 Fair Practices

*The institution demonstrates that all stakeholders are treated equitably, transparently, and consistently while upholding ICAITS standards and maintaining public trust in higher education quality assurance.*

##### 3.3 Records Management and Transcripts

*All institutional and student information and records are securely and confidentially maintained and retained in accordance with laws applicable to the jurisdiction(s) in which the institution operates and with professional requirements. The institution maintains and upholds a records management policy, and transcripts are readily available and maintained permanently in print or digital form.*

##### 3.4 Policy Approval

*The institution's publications and policies are approved by the board or administration, as appropriate, and include at least the following: Board Manual (if applicable), Policies Manual or Library, Catalog(s), Faculty Handbook, and Student Handbook.*

##### 3.5 Publication and Policy Clarity

*The institution's publications and policies are current, clear, factually accurate, and consistent with each other and with ICAITS Standards.*

##### 3.6 Policies and Policy Manual or Library

*The institution demonstrates transparency and consistency in making policies accessible in a publicly accessible policy manual or library that includes at least the following policies:*

- Academic Calendar*
- Admissions Policy*
- Affirmation of Core Philosophy and Commitment*
- A.I. Usage Policy*
- Course Duration Policy*
- Credit Transfer Policy*
- Enrollment Agreement*
- Good Standing Policy*
- Grading Policy*
- Graduation Policy*
- Grievance Policy*
- Intellectual Honesty Policy*
- Leadership and Governance Policy*

*Non-discrimination Policy*  
*Organizational Chart*  
*Privacy Policy*  
*Records Management Policy*  
*Refund and Withdrawal Policy*  
*Sexual Abuse and Child Abuse Policy*  
*Substance Abuse Policy*  
*Tuition Policy*  
*Writing Style Policy*

### 3.7 Grievance and Due Process

*The institution maintains and consistently applies clear due process and grievance policies and procedures for all constituents. Documentation of any due process or grievance proceedings are made available to ICAITS upon request.*

## STANDARD 4 – AUTHORITY TO OPERATE

In demonstration of appropriate subjection to governing authorities, the institution maintains its eligibility for accreditation and be properly licensed, authorized, exempted, or approved by all applicable state and federal education institutional authorizations (or their equivalent for non-U.S. institutions).

In addition to compliance with ICAITS Accreditation Standards, the institution demonstrates that it meets the Federal Requirements in 4.3-4.14. Failure to meet the Federal Requirements will be reported to the United States Department of Education and will trigger an ICAITS review of the institution.

### Core Accountabilities

#### 4.1 Legal Authorization to Operate

*The institution demonstrates that it has legal authorization to operate from all appropriate governmental agencies (state, federal, territory, country) in which it is located and has filed copies of such authorizations with ICAITS.*

#### 4.2 Authorization to Offer Distance Learning

*The institution demonstrates that it has legal authorization to offer such courses and/or programs in US States and territories in which the learner declares residency. The institution’s distance learning offerings meet all applicable ICAITS Accreditation and Federal Requirements.*

#### 4.3 Federal Requirement: Credit Hours

*The institution demonstrates its awarding of credit hours in compliance with the Federal definition of a credit hour: “A credit hour for Federal purposes is an institutionally established equivalency that reasonably approximates some minimum amount of student work reflective of the amount of worked expected in a Carnegie unit: key phrases being ‘institutionally established,’ ‘equivalency,’ ‘reasonable approximate,’ and ‘minimum amount.’” If the Carnegie unit is not the institution’s primary unit of academic measure (e.g., outcomes-based education), then the institution must demonstrate equivalency in its assignment of credit hours. The institution demonstrates peer review of a credit hour, via ICAITS and/or peer evaluators. ICAITS will determine the reliability and accuracy of the assignment and process (§600.2, §602.24(f)).*

#### 4.4 Federal Requirement: Program Length and Cost

*The institution demonstrates that its programs are aligned with institutional mission and objectives, are of duration and length comparable to other accredited higher education institutions, and that program-specific tuition and fees are published and appropriate for program length and objectives (§602.16(a)(1)viii).*

#### *4.5 Federal Requirement: Student Complaints*

*Institutions must record and retain record of all student complaints. Records must be kept of (1) student complaints received, (2) the process for addressing the student, and (3) how the student complaint was handled in accordance with the institution's policies and procedures. The institution's student complaint policy must include (1) a method for receiving confidential student input, (2) clear step-by-step procedures for due process, (3) and the identification of an appropriate office that securely maintains all information and records of complaints, appeals, proceedings, and instructions for filing a complaint with ICAITS and any other relevant government agencies (§602.16(a)(1)ix).*

#### *4.6 Federal Requirement: Transfer of Credit Policies*

*The institution has published policies and procedures for accepting credits in transfer. Published policies include criteria for evaluating, awarding, and accepting credit transfer. Policies and practices must ensure that course work is at the appropriate level for collegiate transfer. The institution awarding and accepting credit transfer is responsible for the quality of course work and credit given on the transcript. The policies and procedures must be published and communicated to those who administer the policies. Articulation agreements must be disclosed and the institution listed with which the agreement is made (§602.24(e)).*

#### *4.7 Distance Education*

*The institution demonstrates that programs and courses offered via Distance Education are in compliance with the Federal definition of Distance Education: Education that uses one or more of the technologies listed to deliver instruction to students who are separated from the instructor and to support regular and substantive interaction between the students and the instructor, either synchronously or asynchronously. The technologies may include the internet; one-way and two-way transmissions through open broadcast, closed circuit, cable, microwave, broadband lines, fiber optics, satellite, or wireless communications devices; audio conferencing; or video cassettes, DVDs, and CD-ROMs, if used in a course in conjunction with any of the technologies listed above (§602.3).*

#### *4.8 Verification of Student Identity*

*The institution has a process to verify that the student who registers for a program or course is the same student who participates in, completes, and receives credit. Methods to verify the student include but are not limited to: a secure login or passcode, proctored examinations, or new or other technologies and practices that are effective in verifying the identity of the student. Institutions must notify the student at the time of registration of any additional charges associated with the verification of student identity (§602.17(g)1).*

#### *4.9 Student Privacy*

*The institution has a written procedure for protecting the privacy of students enrolled in all programs or courses (§602.17(g)2).*

#### *4.10 Public Information*

*The institution makes available to students and the public through the institution's Catalog(s), website and/or other methods, the following information: academic calendar, grading policies, refund policies, admission policies, program requirements, and information regarding tuition and fees (§602.16(a)(1)vii).*

#### *4.11 Advertising and Recruitment Materials, Policies, and Practice*

*The institution's advertising and recruitment materials accurately represent the institution's practices and policies (§602.16(a)(1)vii).*

#### *4.12 Fraud and Abuse*

*The institution does not engage in fraud or abuse and practices or procedures that are designed to deceive or falsify information to students (§602.27(6)).*

#### 4.13 Student Achievement

*The institution's assessment of student achievement includes, at a minimum, the collection and analysis of retention rates and graduation rates for undergraduate degree programs, and course completion rates for certificate programs, job placement rates, transfer rates, pass rates for state or other licensing examinations, and other appropriate measures. Student achievement information is made available to the public on the institution's website and/or via other appropriate means in an easily accessible and understood format (§602.16(a)(1)).*

#### 4.14 Title IV Participation

*If applicable, the institution maintains and demonstrates compliance with all relevant program responsibilities under Title IV of the most recent Higher Education Act as amended (§602.16(a)(1)x, §602.27(a)6, 7).*

### **STANDARD 5 – GOVERNANCE AND ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE**

The institution maintains an organizational and governance structure that offers adequate academic and administrative guidance, supervision, competence, and continuity to support the responsible, effective, and sustainable use of resources in alignment with its mission.

#### **Core Accountabilities**

##### 5.1 Governance

###### 5.1.1 Owners, Governing Board Members, and Other Leaders and Administrators

*The institution's owners, governing board members, and other leaders and administrators demonstrate appropriate qualification for the roles they fulfill, and demonstrate competence in their area(s) of appointment. Specifically, each demonstrates expertise in at least one area related to education administration, finance, design and delivery of educational programs, and student services. Each are above reproach in reputation, having a record of integrity and ethical conduct. Each demonstrate compliance with the institution's policies, procedures and rules of conduct.*

###### 5.1.2 Succession Plan

*The institution maintains a written plan for the continuation of operations in the event a leadership succession is necessary. The plan includes specific delineation of responsibilities and roles to be fulfilled during times of transition. The institution reviews the plan periodically and revises as needed.*

##### 5.2 Organizational Structure

###### 5.2.1 Appropriate Structure

*The institution maintains an organizational structure that offers adequate guidance, supervision, competence, and continuity to support the appropriate use of resources in sustainable fulfillment of the institution's mission.*

###### 5.2.2 Transparency in Structure

*The institution makes publicly accessible an organization chart that accurately reflects the assignment and accountabilities of all personnel. The institution reviews this chart annually and revises as needed.*

## STANDARD 6 – EFFECTIVENESS THROUGH ASSESSMENT AND PLANNING

The institution's strategic planning processes must involve every department and function and culminate in the development, implementation, and assessment of a comprehensive Institutional Strategic Plan that considers both short term planning (1-2 years) and long term planning (3-5 years) for priorities and institutional goals.

In order to measure and ensure the effectiveness of the institution's planning and execution, institutions will develop and maintain a comprehensive Institutional Assessment Plan. This plan identifies outcomes and assessments used to evaluate effectiveness in achieving those outcomes, and thoroughly describes all processes used to evaluate institutional functions and outcomes. The Institutional Assessment Plan leads to evidence of continuous improvement through analysis of assessment results.

### Core Accountabilities

#### 6.1 Institutional Assessment

##### 6.1.1 Assessment Plan

*The institution has developed, implemented, and assessed a comprehensive and Ownership/Board approved Assessment Plan resulting from global assessment processes and based on internal and external factors.*

##### 6.1.2 Global Process for Institutional Assessment

*The institution utilizes multiple approaches (qualitative, quantitative, direct, and indirect) and demonstrates involvement from all departments in data-gathering and assessment of functions, institutional effectiveness, learner success, and outcomes.*

##### 6.1.3 Assessment of Effectiveness of Learning Outcomes

*The institution maintains and regularly provides a systematic assessment of the appropriateness and effectiveness of learning outcomes at the institutional, program, and course levels against the standard of the institution's mission.*

#### 6.2 Strategic Planning

##### 6.2.1 Global Process for Strategic Planning

*Based on processes aligned with the Assessment Plan, the institution demonstrates involvement from all departments in strategic planning processes and in the development and assessment of the Strategic Plan.*

##### 6.2.2 Strategic Plan

*The institution has developed, implemented, and assessed an Ownership/Board approved Strategic Plan developed through the implementation of the Assessment Plan in consideration of internal and external factors, and which effectively aligns the institutions resources with the institutional mission, objectives, budget, and assessment.*

**STANDARD 7 – FINANCE AND OPERATIONS**

The institution demonstrates its viability and sustainability through financial integrity and stability. The institution's financial resources and facilities are adequate to fulfill the institution's mission and to support its programs and activities for the foreseeable future.

**Core Accountabilities***7.1 Adequate Financial Resources*

*The institution's finances are adequate to support personnel, equipment, materials, support services, and facilities for delivering approved programs.*

*7.2 Annual Financial Report*

*The institution submits an annual financial report including at a minimum an itemized Profit and Loss Statement and current Balance Sheet.*

*7.3 Independent External Verification*

*An independent external review of the institution's financial statements is conducted each year, in accordance with review and/or auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America. Independent external reviews demonstrate a recent history of financial stability.*

*7.4 Credit and Reserves*

*The institution demonstrates credit lines or other liquid reserves adequate to ensure sustainability of operations. Proprietary institutions demonstrate a pattern of cash distributions to shareholders of no more than 60% of net income.*

*7.5 Qualified Management*

*The institution has sufficient, competent finance management, led by a professionally qualified Chief Financial Officer.*

*7.6 Strategic Planning and Budgeting*

*Strategic planning and budgeting processes and outcomes are demonstrably connected and support the institution's mission and objectives.*

*7.7 Internal Fiscal Evaluation*

*The institution, at administrative, executive, board, and ownership levels, regularly and systematically evaluates the institution's fiscal condition and management of its financial operations, including the use of appropriate internal and external mechanisms which ensure financial stability including enrollment management, diversification of revenue resources, and realistic budgeting.*

*7.8 Facilities and Equipment*

*The institution provides, maintains, and controls adequate facilities and equipment to appropriately serve the needs of the educational programs, support services, and other mission related activities.*

*7.9 Technology and Resources*

*Information technology and electronic resources are sufficient to provide appropriate support for all functions of the institution's operations.*

*7.10 Health, Safety, and Security*

*Appropriate health, safety, and security measures, including an Emergency Plan, are in place for all institutional facilities and activities.*

## STANDARD 8 – ENROLLMENT MANAGEMENT

The institution's advertising, recruitment, enrollment, and retention efforts are ethical, transparent, and focused on attracting prospective students who are likely to succeed, while its admissions criteria ensure applicants have the ability to succeed in a distance learning environment, reflecting the institution's mission and values, and meeting established standards for disclosure, consumer protections and ethical practices.

### Core Accountabilities

#### 8.1 Recruitment

##### 8.1.1 Advertising and Promotion

*The institution ensures all advertising and promotions are ethical, clear, and accurate. Materials disclose education offerings and relevant occupational opportunities, and include the institution's name, address, and website URL, as well as accreditation status and details.*

##### 8.1.2 Accuracy in Advertising

*Advertisements accurately reflect programs and services, avoid using "guarantee," and may use "free" in limited cases. In-residence components and costs are disclosed. Testimonials on the website are truthful, recent (under four years), and backed by signed written consent.*

##### 8.1.3 Disclosures

*The website, catalog, and enrollment agreements disclose:*

- a. Program details, costs, schedules, and delivery methods before collecting student contact information*
- b. That transfer credit is determined by the receiving institution.*
- c. Student consumer information as per federal and state regulations.*

##### 8.1.4 Catalog Archives

*Catalogs are permanently archived.*

##### 8.1.5 Accuracy in ICAITS Accreditation Disclosures

*The institution accurately reflects its accredited status and uses the official ICAITS accreditation logo and statement of accreditation ("Accredited by ICAITS" or "ICAITS Accredited") when publishing its accreditation status in all online and print advertisements and promotional materials. ICAITS name, address, phone number, and web address are published on the institution's website and catalog. The institution publicly corrects any misleading or inaccurate information it releases on its accreditation status or anything pertaining to ICAITS.*

##### 8.1.6 Learner Recruitment

*The institution takes responsibility for the actions and conduct of its recruitment personnel, ensuring they are properly trained, licensed, and comply with state, federal, and ICAITS standards. All recruitment staff follow relevant laws and may not use misleading titles or advertise without authorization. If offering referral gifts, they must be limited to institution-branded items.*

#### 8.2 Enrollment

*The institution sets admissions criteria to ensure applicants can succeed in their selected program(s), reflecting the institution's mission, values, and learner population. All admission practices and agreements meet established standards and ethically disclose all party's obligations.*

##### 8.2.1 Admissions Policies and Disclosures

*Admissions policies ensure the institution enrolls learners capable of succeeding. Applicants are informed of criteria, educational demands, and required documents before enrollment. The*

*institution admits learners regardless of race, color, national origin, disability, sex, or age, providing reasonable accommodations. Official transcripts must be received within one semester of admission, or the learner is withdrawn.*

#### **8.2.2 Learner Identity Verification and Permissions**

*Learner identity verification is conducted during admissions to ensure the learner completing coursework and assessments is the same one awarded credit. The institution obtains permission from responsible parties to ensure that enrolling learners below the compulsory school age does not interfere with required schooling.*

#### **8.2.3 Admissions Criteria**

*The institution's admissions criteria align with its mission and ensure applicants can succeed. Criteria are applied consistently, and exceptions are documented. Non-English transcripts are evaluated by qualified third parties, and language proficiency is verified for non-native English speakers.*

##### **8.2.3.1 Non-Degree and Undergraduate Programs**

*The institution obtains official documentation of a high school diploma or equivalent (or report of good standing for early college learners) at admission. For self-certification, applicants must sign a statement confirming their diploma, provide school details, and follow procedures to validate the information if necessary.*

##### **8.2.3.2 Graduate Programs**

*At admission, the institution requires official documentation of a bachelor's degree from an approved institution.*

##### **8.2.3.3 Doctoral Programs**

*At admission, the institution requires documentation of a master's degree from an accredited institution and relevant academic experience.*

#### **8.2.4 Admission Disclosure**

*The institution notifies applicants of admission and documents the reasons for any denial.*

#### **8.2.5 Credit Transfer and Equivalent and Experiential Learning**

*The institution has a fair transfer credit policy published in the catalog, with clear steps and required documentation. Students can appeal transfer credit decisions. Credits are not denied solely based on the accrediting institution. Experiential learning credits cannot exceed 25% of any degree, and are determined according to the [CAEL Ten Standards for Assessing Learning](#). Learners must complete at least 25% of their degree credits through the awarding institution.*

#### **8.2.6 Enrollment Agreements**

*The institution provides enrollment agreements that clearly describe the educational program and fully inform applicants of the rights, responsibilities, and obligations of both the learner and the institution. Before acceptance, learners must acknowledge the tuition refund policy, which is published in the agreement, catalog, and website. Agreements become binding only after submission by the learner and acceptance by the institution, with a copy provided within 10 days and maintained in the student's record. All agreements comply with federal and state requirements, including required disclosures, type size, notice to buyer, and computation examples. Any separate payment contracts are incorporated by reference into the enrollment agreement.*

### **8.3 Enrollment Policies and Disclosures**

*The institution maintains fair tuition, refund, cancellation, and collection policies, clearly discloses costs and fees on enrollment agreements, and applies all procedures consistently and ethically.*

### 8.3.1 Financial Disclosures

*The institution discloses all education-related costs, including tuition, fees, materials, and required services, before enrollment. Optional service costs and the refund policy, including a sample calculation, are clearly communicated, and student acknowledgment is documented.*

### 8.3.2 Cancellation and Withdrawal Policies and Disclosures

*The institution maintains and applies fair, published cancellation and withdrawal policies. Learners may submit notice of cancellation or withdrawal through approved methods designated by the institution, which comply with federal and state requirements and do not impose undue difficulty. Learners have five calendar days after signing the enrollment agreement to cancel and receive a full refund of all payments. Cancellations after five days but before the program begins are eligible for a refund minus certain fees, including an application or transfer evaluation fee (up to \$75USD), a one-time registration fee (up to 20% of tuition, not exceeding \$200USD), and any third-party library or resource service fees. Learners who have paid in full but are not eligible for a refund still receive all educational materials, including kits and equipment. If promissory notes or enrollment agreements are sold to third parties, both the institution and the third parties must comply with ICAITS cancellation policies.*

### 8.3.3 Refund Policy

*The institution has a fair refund policy, that complies with state and ICAITS standards, and that is disclosed in the enrollment agreement. The institution refunds any money due within 30 days of cancellation.*

#### 8.3.3.1 Time Based Term Refund Policy

*Institutions using a time-based term refund policy must refund 100% of tuition for courses not started and disclose the refund schedule in the enrollment agreement. For multi-course programs, each course is treated separately for refunds. The institution may retain the application fee, a one-time registration fee (up to 20% of tuition, max \$200USD), and library/resource fees, with the remainder refunded per the published schedule.*

#### 8.3.3.2 Flexible Time Schedule Refund Policy

*Institutions using a flexible time schedule refund policy must disclose curriculum benchmarks (10%, 25%, 50% completion). If a student cancels after completing at least one but less than 50% of assignments, the institution may retain the application fee, a registration fee (up to 20% of tuition, max \$200USD), and library/resource fees, with the remainder refunded per the schedule.*

#### 8.3.3.3 Residential Refund Policy

*For courses with mandatory in-residence training, the enrollment agreement must list distance and in-residence costs separately. Distance study refunds follow standard or flexible policies, while in-residence refunds use the time-based policy if over six weeks or flexible policy if under six weeks. After the first in-residence session, the institution may retain the application fee, a registration fee (up to 20% of tuition, max \$200USD), and library/resource fees, with the remainder refunded per policy.*

### 8.3.4 Collection Procedures

*The institution's collection procedures are ethical, fair, support learner success, and respect the rights of both learners and the institution.*

## STANDARD 9 – ACADEMICS

The institution's programs, offered in-person, online, or in hybrid formats, focus on learner education within a transformative context, that is aligned with the [ICAITS Values and Affirmations](#), follow recognized postsecondary fields of study, and include clear course requirements and completion procedures. Program learning outcomes clearly define the knowledge and skills learners will gain. Curricula and materials are well-designed, cohesive, up-to-date, and supported by appropriate faculty and resources, ensuring evaluation methods align with outcomes and meet accepted educational standards.

### Core Accountabilities

#### 9.1 Programs, Curricula, and Assessment

##### 9.1.1 Degree Program Requirements

*The institution offers at least one certificate, competency, diploma, or degree program. Degree programs require a minimum of 60 credit hours for an associate, 120 for a baccalaureate, and 30 for graduate, doctoral, and professional programs.*

##### 9.1.2 Mission Alignment

*Each program clearly relates to the mission and objectives of the institution*

##### 9.1.3 General Education

*Undergraduate programs include a broad general education core: baccalaureate programs require at least 30 credit hours across key disciplines, and associate programs require at least 15 credit hours.*

##### 9.1.4 Education Outcomes

*The institution establishes clearly defined, measurable learning outcomes at the course, program, and institutional levels. These outcomes guide curriculum design, instructional methods, and assessment practices, and are consistently reflected in both academic programs and support services to ensure alignment with overall educational goals. The institution's programs provide a common core of knowledge, enhancing students' educational and vocational skills, and meet accepted standards for their level.*

##### 9.1.5 Education Assessment and Continuous Improvement

*The institution has a systematic, ongoing process for evaluating all educational programs. This evaluation includes analyzing the achievement of program learning outcomes, learner retention, completion and graduation rates, job placement success, and, when applicable, licensing or certification exam results, along with any other relevant evidence to assess program effectiveness and inform improvements.*

##### 9.1.6 Education Level Distinction

*Graduate programs meet post-baccalaureate standards of rigor, advance learners' development, and clearly differentiate expectations and outcomes among baccalaureate, master's, and doctoral levels of study.*

##### 9.1.7 Learning Resources and Research Support

*The institution maintains and makes available to all learners adequate library and learning resources that support the institutional mission and programs, and that support the continued growth and development of learners and faculty.*

##### 9.1.8 Institutional Support for Library and Learning Resources

*The institution supports the library and learning resources with adequate funding and qualified personnel appropriate for maintaining and developing the library and learning resources.*

#### 9.1.9 Technology Integration and Innovation

*The institution demonstrates commitment to innovation in integrates information resources and technology into education, ensuring students develop proficiency appropriate to their degree or field.*

### 9.2 Faculty

*The institution retains qualified faculty with appropriate credentials and experience who provide effective instruction aligned with the institution's mission and contribute to academic policy development. The institution upholds and protects academic freedom for faculty, allowing them to teach, research, and express ideas responsibly within their disciplines while supporting open inquiry, intellectual diversity, the institution's mission and standards, and [ICAITS Values and Affirmations](#).*

#### 9.2.1 Adequate Faculty

*The institution retains an adequate number of faculty who are spiritually, academically, and experientially qualified to support the programs offered, deliver instruction effectively, and fulfill related academic and institutional responsibilities.*

#### 9.2.2 Engaged Faculty

*The institution's faculty support its mission and objectives by fulfilling all required responsibilities, including teaching, curriculum development and review, and academic oversight. Faculty ensure the quality and integrity of educational programs and actively participate in institutional governance.*

#### 9.2.3 Terminal Requirements

*A minimum of 25% of baccalaureate level and 100% of graduate level and above courses in each program are taught by faculty who hold a terminal degree in the appropriate discipline, ensuring academic depth, rigor, and subject-matter expertise. There may be exceptions for faculty with exceptional tested experience. Such exceptions are transparent and well documented.*

#### 9.2.4 Faculty Leadership

*The institution publishes and enforces policies defining faculty responsibilities for curriculum and academic oversight. The institution has a structured process for faculty leadership in developing, reviewing, modifying, and assessing all educational programs. This process ensures curricula remain current, academically rigorous, aligned with learning outcomes, and responsive to learner needs and institutional goals.*

#### 9.2.5 Faculty Development

*The institution offers to faculty ongoing opportunities for professional and spiritual development to support continuous improvement as educators, scholars, and practitioners, and to enhance instructional effectiveness and alignment with the institution's mission.*

#### 9.2.6 Faculty Evaluation

*The institution conducts regular evaluations of each faculty member using published criteria to assess teaching effectiveness, professional performance, and contribution to academic quality, and uses the results to support continuous improvement.*

**STANDARD 10 – LEARNER SUCCESS**

The institution provides comprehensive services that support learners' spiritual, intellectual, and personal development. It recruits, admits, and enrolls learners responsibly, promotes their academic success, and offers the resources and support services necessary to help students achieve their educational goals.

**Core Accountabilities****10.1 Learner Support**

*The institution provides a range of services for learner success that are aligned with the institution's mission and objectives, ensuring that all learners have access to support regardless of their location or whether they study on-campus, online, or through hybrid programs.*

**10.2 Learner Success Personnel**

*The institution retains a sufficient number of qualified personnel in learner services who possess the appropriate education, training, and experience to effectively support learners. These persons provide guidance, resources, and assistance that help learners succeed academically, personally, and spiritually, ensuring that the institution fulfills its mission and objectives.*

**10.3 Advising and Counseling**

*The institution provides academic advising and career counseling services tailored to its educational programs. These services guide learners in selecting courses, developing academic plans, achieving learning outcomes, and preparing for careers in their chosen fields, ensuring support for both their educational and professional development.*

**10.4 Financial Aid (Where Applicable)**

*If the institution offers financial aid, then the institution offers comprehensive student financial aid services, managed by a qualified and knowledgeable professional. These services include guidance on available funding options, assistance with completing applications for federal, state, and institutional aid (if applicable) explanation of eligibility requirements, and counseling on financial planning and repayment responsibilities, where applicable. The goal is to ensure learners have the resources and support needed to access and manage financial resources effectively, enabling them to pursue and complete their educational programs successfully.*

**10.5 Alumni Services**

*The institution provides ongoing support for alumni to promote their continued success after graduation. This includes career services, networking opportunities, access to professional development resources, mentoring programs, and guidance on further education or certifications. Alumni support is designed to help graduates apply their learning in professional and personal contexts, maintain connections with the institution, and advance in their careers or community roles, ensuring the long-term impact of their education.*

## PROCESS FOR ACCREDITATION

1. Initial Application
  - a. Affirmation of Eligibility (Including Executive Team ICAITS Certification)
  - b. Completion and Submission of Initial Application
  - c. Payment of Application Fee
2. ICAITS Review of Application
  - a. If Denied – reasons provided and path for remedy prescribed
    - i. To move forward, institution must complete again all steps of Initial Application
  - b. If Approved – institution moves to Application Status
3. Approval to Application Status
  - a. Institution may refer to itself as in “Application Status” with ICAITS
  - b. Institution may begin the Self-Study Affirmation
4. Self-Study Affirmation
  - a. Complete Self-Study Affirmation Statement, which includes the institution’s:
    - i. Affirmation of compliance with each Core Accountability
    - ii. Explanation of compliance with each Core Accountability
    - iii. Evidence of compliance with each Core Accountability (either by documentation or by link)
    - iv. Payment of Self-Study Fee
    - v. Payment of Program Fees
5. ICAITS Review of Self-Study Affirmation
  - a. If Denied – reasons provided and path for remedy prescribed
  - b. If Approved – Institution moves to Candidate Status
6. Approval to Candidate Status
  - a. Institution may refer to itself as in “Candidate Status” with ICAITS
  - b. Institution requests scheduling for Onsite Evaluation
  - c. Institution may prepare for Onsite Evaluation
7. Onsite Evaluation
  - a. ICAITS evaluation team assesses institution’s Self-Study Affirmation, comparing it with onsite and real time findings
  - b. ICAITS evaluation team reports findings and recommendation to ICAITS
8. ICAITS Determines Accreditation Determination
  - a. If Denied – reasons provided and path for remedy prescribed
    - i. Institution may not refer to itself as having any status with ICAITS
  - b. If Deferred – reasons provided and path for remedy prescribed
    - i. Institution may continue to refer to itself as in “Candidate Status” as long as it continues to show progress in prescribed remedy (as determined by ICAITS)
  - c. If Approved – Institution moves to Accredited Status
9. Approval to Accredited Status
  - a. Institution may refer to itself as “Accredited by ICAITS”
  - b. Institution will submit annual Self-Study Reports
  - c. Institution will submit Annual Membership Fee
  - d. Institution will complete its first Accreditation Renewal Evaluation in year four of its initial accreditation period
    - i. If Denied – reasons provided and path for remedy prescribed
      1. Institution may not refer to itself as having any status with ICAITS
    - ii. If Deferred – reasons provided and path for remedy prescribed
      1. Institution may refer to itself as in “Candidate Status” as long as it continues to show progress in prescribed remedy (as determined by ICAITS)
    - iii. If Approved – Institution retains Accredited Status
  - e. If Accredited Status retained after first Accreditation Renewal Evaluation, then future Evaluations will occur in each seventh year of accreditation.

## SCHEDULE OF FEES

	0-300 Learners	301-750 Learners	751-1500 Learners	1500+ Learners
Application Fee	\$200	\$300	\$500	\$800
Self-Study Fee	\$1000	\$1200	\$1500	\$2000
Program Fee	\$100 per program*	\$100 per program*	\$100 per program*	\$100 per program*
Onsite Evaluation Fee	\$300+expenses**	\$500+expenses**	\$800+expenses**	\$1200+expenses**
Total Accreditation Cost:	\$1500+exp+prog	\$1700+ exp+prog	\$2800+ exp+prog	\$3200+ exp+prog
Annual Membership Fee	\$700	\$900	\$1200	\$1500
Substantive Change Fee	\$300	\$300	\$500	\$500
Accreditation Renewal Fee***	\$1300+ exp+prog	\$1700+ exp+prog	\$2300+ exp+prog	\$3200+ exp+prog

*All Fees are Non-refundable*

\*Program Fee is per program. A program is described as any course of study leading to a degree or certificate. Programs are quantified by the number of degrees and certificates offered.

\*\*Expenses refer to actual travel expenses for Evaluation Team Member(s)

\*\*\*Any year in which an institution pays an Accreditation Renewal Fee, the institution pays no additional Annual Membership Fee. The Annual Membership Fee is included in the Accreditation Renewal Fee

## DEFINITIONS

**Accredited Institution** – An institution accredited by ICAITS, or otherwise by an accrediting agency approved by the U.S. Department of Education or an equivalent foreign government agency.

**Applicant Institution** – An institution whose initial application has been approved, by ICAITS, and which may begin preparation for the Self-Study Affirmation.

**Branch Campus** – A geographically separate additional location of an institution, independent of the main campus of the institution, being a permanent location offering courses leading to a degree or other credential, having its own faculty and supervisory structure, and having its own budgetary authority.

**Candidate Institution** – An institution which has been granted pre-accredited status by ICAITS, indicating that the institution has successfully completed the Self-Study Affirmation, and has been found to be in Full Compliance.

**Chief Academic Officer** – An individual who has a contract with the institution, who possesses appropriate credentials, professional experience, and competence for the assigned role, whose earned degrees are appropriate to the assigned responsibilities, and whose outside professional activities do not detract from the specified academic leadership responsibilities.

**Chief Executive Officer** – An individual who has a contract with the institution, who possesses appropriate credentials, professional experience, and competence for the assigned role, whose earned degrees are appropriate to the assigned responsibilities, and whose outside professional activities do not detract from the specified executive leadership responsibilities.

**Compliance (Basic)** – An initial determination by ICAITS that the institution is in full compliance with all Standards, as evidenced by the successful completion of the Self-Study Affirmation, and that the institution has the ability to demonstrate compliance with all Standards within the period of candidacy.

**Compliance (Full)** – A determination by ICAITS that the institution has demonstrated full compliance with all Standards, as evidenced by the successful completion of Onsite Evaluation.

**Concentration (Area of Emphasis)** – nine or more semester credit hours, or equivalent, in which all the courses are within the same or a related field

**Extension Site** – A geographically separate additional location of an institution which requires specific authority to operate where courses offered on-site include less than half of all educational programs offered by the institution.

**External Financial Review** – A financial review performed in conformity with generally accepted accounting principles (GAAP) or Government Auditing Standards (GAGAS) and federal guidelines (or appropriate standards for those institutions located outside the United States) by auditors who are licensed, approved, or authorized to conduct review services in the jurisdiction where the reviewed institution is domiciled, is not sanctioned or under investigation, and is independent with respect to the institution (e.g., reviewers are not members of the governing board, not employees of the institution, and not involved in the decision making activity, etc.).

**Faculty** – An individual who has a contract with the institution, who possesses appropriate credentials, professional experience, and competence for the courses to be developed and/or taught, whose earned degrees are appropriate to the assigned responsibilities, and whose outside professional activities do not detract from the specified academic development, teaching, and/or mentoring responsibilities. The institution may also designate faculty members additionally as part-time or adjunct. However, only those contracted for the current or most recently completed academic year may be included in any published faculty listing.

**Financial Reserve** – Institutions must demonstrate the establishment of a contingency reserve held in an account separate from normal operations, with Board or ownership approval of policies directing the use, investment of, and repayment of the contingency reserve funds.

**Financial Stability** – Institutions must demonstrate a history of financial sustainability adequate to support existing programs and assure the continuity of their essential operations beyond the date when current learners would complete their programs. Events which indicate a lack of financial stability include:

- Negative change in Total Net Assets or Retained Earnings
- Enrollment decline of 20% or more
- Notification from the Department of Education of composite score below 1.5
- The use of pledges to achieve a positive change in Net Assets
- The required liquidity is substantially depleted

**Global (Processes)** – Global refers to the involvement of every department, unit, or function in a process or series of processes.

**Institutional Independence** – The Ownership or Board of the institution is independent from any external entity (including financially) to the extent that it is solely accountable for meeting the ICAITS Accreditation Standards.

**Instructional Site** – A geographically separate additional location of an institution which does not require specific authority to operate, and where courses offered amount to less than half of all educational programs offered by the institution.

**Library Director** – An individual who has earned a Master's in Library Science or a closely related degree, or who has exceptional experience in Library leadership, and who is capable of leading Library operations.

**Major** – The emphasis or academic focus comprising a minimum of 30% of a program's total credit hours, all within the same or a related field of study.

**Program Area** – An area of academic discipline in which one or more-degree programs, certificates, or diplomas are offered.

**Teaching Site** – A geographically separate additional location of an institution which requires specific authority to operate where courses offered on-site may include more than half of all educational programs offered by the institution, but does not necessarily have its own supervisory structure or budgetary authority.

#### INITIAL APPLICATION

*The following are the questions on the initial ICAITS Initial Accreditation Application:*

Institution Legal Name  
 Institution DBAs (if applicable)  
 Institution EIN  
 Institution Physical Address  
 Institution Mailing Address if Different  
 Institution Phone  
 Institution Email  
 Institution Website  
 Institution Articles of Incorporation  
 Institution Bylaws  
 Institution Launch Date  
 Institution Executives, Officers and Ownership (Names and Titles)  
 Appointed Accreditation Officer  
     Name  
     Address  
     Mailing Address  
     Email  
     Phone  
 Number of Currently Enrolled (Active, FT and PT) Learners

The leadership of the Institution affirm that they have read and understood the [ICAITS Values and Affirmations](#), and that the Institution is in full agreement, without reservation.

The leadership of the Institution affirm that the entire executive team has earned ICAITS Accreditation Officer Certification.

The leadership of the Institution affirm that they have read and understood the Schedule of Fees and understand that all fees are non-refundable.

The leadership of the Institution affirm that they have read and understood the Standards for Accreditation and that the Institution is in substantive compliance with the Standards, and can reasonably expect to complete the accreditation process.

The leadership of the institution affirm that the Institution understands the financial commitments to complete and maintain accreditation (see the Schedule of Fees), and that the Institution has the necessary financial resources to complete the accreditation process.

The leadership of the Institution affirm that the Institution will not make any promotional use of its application status with ICAITS until/unless it receives a final accreditation determination of “Approved” from ICAITS.

The leadership of the Institution affirm that the Institution will uphold the ICAITS Bylaws Article IV, as follows:

#### ARTICLE IV. MEMBERS AND MEMBERSHIP

The Corporation shall have Members collectively called the “Members.” Membership in the Corporation is limited to institutions accredited by the Corporation. the Corporation shall publish annually, or as determined by the Corporation, a directory including names, addresses, and other information of all Members. Each Member shall be entitled to one vote, for any action for which a vote is required. Only a representative of an institution that is a Member may cast a vote on behalf of that Member.

##### **4.02 Meetings and Quorum**

The Corporation shall meet annually to elect Directors, to receive reports, and to transact other business. The Secretary of the Corporation shall send notice of such meetings to each Member not less than seven (7) days nor more than thirty (30) days prior to the date of the meeting.

Special meetings of the Membership may be held at the call of the Chair of the Board of Directors or by the Secretary upon the written request of one-fourth of the Members. The Secretary of the Corporation shall send

notice of such meetings to each Member not less than seven (7) days nor more than thirty (30) days prior to the date of the meeting, unless such notice is waived by consent of a quorum of the requesting Members.

At least one-fourth of the Members qualified to vote shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business at the annual or any special meeting of the Corporation. The Presiding Officer shall have power to adjourn the meeting from time to time without notice other than announcement at the meeting, until a quorum is present.

##### **4.03 Fees**

Dues and fees rates shall be determined by the Board of Directors and shall be payable by Members in advance by March 31 of each fiscal year. the Corporation shall be empowered to withdraw the accreditation of any Member whose dues or fees are delinquent.

##### **4.04 Mediation, Arbitration and Litigation**

Any dispute, controversy or claim shall first be submitted to mediation. The parties agree to participate in good faith in the mediation process. If the dispute is not resolved through mediation within 60 days, the parties may proceed to arbitration or litigation as otherwise provided in this agreement.

By applying for accreditation with the Corporation, the prospective Member agrees to exhaust all appeal opportunities and to submit fully and faithfully to final, binding arbitration proceedings before filing any suit, claim or proceeding relating to membership, accreditation or accredited status, whether a claim for damages or injunctive or declaratory relief, brought by a Member, former Member, or applicant for accreditation, against the Corporation or any agent acting on the behalf of the Corporation. An institution legal action against the Corporation for any reason, must bring the action in the state of Florida. The Member, former Member, or applicant for membership must escrow sufficient funds to guarantee that the Corporation will recover its legal fees in defending the legal action if the Member does not

prevail. Should the Member, former Member, or applicant for membership prevail over the Corporation, the escrow will be returned. The law of Florida shall govern the interpretation, validity, and performance of the terms of these Bylaws, as well as any dispute between the Corporation and a Member, former Member, or applicant for membership, regardless of the law that might otherwise be applied under any principles of conflicts of law.

#### **4.05 Liability of Members**

No Member of the Corporation shall be liable for obligations of the Corporation in any amount in excess of the membership dues and fees required of such Member for the year in which the indebtedness is incurred, together with any voluntary subscriptions Member may have made to the Corporation.