

ACICS Accreditation Notice

U.S. Department of Education Decision

As a current, prospective student, or existing graduate, you may have heard about a decision involving the U.S. Department of Education (US DOE) and the Accrediting Council for Independent Colleges and Schools (ACICS).

The US DOE decided to withdraw the federal recognition of ACICS, the institutional accrediting agency that accredits Charter College; the decision was made on December 12, 2016.

It is important to note that ACICS' operational standards and practices are under scrutiny with the US DOE and not those of Charter College. We have a long history of maintaining high standards in our curriculum, in the quality of our faculty, and by providing opportunities for our students to positively impact their communities.

Can the College Continue to Participate in Federal Student Aid Programs?

While ACICS seeks legal action against the US DOE in federal court, a process that is currently pending and may take several months to resolve, Charter remains in good standing with the US DOE. Specifically, the US DOE continues to acknowledge Charter as an institution that holds recognized accreditation. As we actively pursue other means of accreditation, Charter maintains its ability to participate in federal student aid programs through the US DOE.

Does Charter have an in-process application with another accreditor?

Yes, Charter has an in-process application with another accreditor. On February 8, 2017, an accreditor, recognized by the US DOE, accepted our application for accreditation. With that acceptance, Charter has successfully met a significant benchmark required by the US DOE.

US DOE Benchmark June 12, 2018 and Potential Outcomes:

The US DOE requires we have a new accreditor by June 12, 2018, 18 months from the US DOE's decision.

Is Charter on-track to meet the June 12, 2018 benchmark?

- Yes, the College is on-track to meet the benchmark.
- As Charter continues to meet the required benchmarks towards accreditation, the new accreditor will meet in January 2018 to make a determination on our accreditation status. We may not know the outcome of the decision until a few weeks after the meeting, but the outcome will be shared with all students.
- This timeframe puts us well in advance of the June 12, 2018 deadline set by the US DOE.

What happens if Charter does not meet the June 12, 2018 benchmark?

- If we are not accredited by another agency by June 12, 2018, federal student aid could not be used at Charter.
- If you qualify for and want to continue using federal student aid to pay for school, you would need to transfer to another institution.

Academic Credits

The decision made by the US DOE on December 12, 2016 does not impact the value of academic credits earned at Charter for its current students and existing graduates; at the time the credits were earned, you attended an accredited school whose accreditor was recognized by the US DOE.

As Charter has an in-process application with another accreditor, which is a required benchmark towards new accreditation, the value of academic credits for current and prospective students will be maintained. Again, Charter is still in good standing with the US DOE and is acknowledged to hold recognized accreditation at this time.

Further, if the June 12, 2018 benchmark referenced above is met, current and prospective students will graduate from an institution whose accreditor is recognized by the US DOE.

If required benchmarks are not met prior to June 12, 2018, credits earned after this date would be issued from a non-accredited institution and may not be transferable. While possible, this scenario is unlikely as we are actively pursuing accreditation.

Ultimately, if you decide to transfer out of Charter, it is up to the receiving institution whether or not the academic credits are accepted. This has always been true and has not changed as a result of the US DOE's decision.

Contacts

The US DOE publishes a blog which you may find helpful; there is information about accreditation and what the announcement means to you; you can find it here: <https://blog.ed.gov/2016/12/college-accreditation-update/>.

Charter is here to help you navigate these special circumstances. Please contact your Campus President/Manager if we can answer any additional questions you may have about accreditation.

Any student who has a complaint relating to the Title IV eligibility or administration, the quality of education received at the College, or otherwise relating to the accreditation standards of the College's former accrediting agency, ACICS, can submit a complaint directly to the College and/or any of the following:

- The US DOE's Office for Civil Rights Complaint website available at: <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/howto.html>.
 - Documents may be emailed to ocr@ed.gov or mailed to U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, Lyndon Baines Johnson Department of Education Bldg, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20202-1100.

- The State authorizing agency:
 - **Alaska:** Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education, PO Box 110505 Juneau, Alaska 99811-0505.
 - **California:** Bureau for Private Postsecondary Education, 2535 Capitol Oaks Drive, Suite 400, Sacramento, CA 95833 or P.O. Box 980818, West Sacramento, CA 95798-0818.
 - **Montana:** Montana University System, Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education, 2500 Broadway Street, PO Box 203201, Helena, MT 59620-3201
 - **New Mexico:** NM Higher Education Department/PPSD, 2044 Galisteo Street, Suite 4, Santa Fe, NM 87505-2100.
 - **Washington:**
 - *Students in Certificate programs:* Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board, 128 10th Avenue SW, Olympia, WA 98504-3105.
 - *Students in Associate's, Bachelor's, or Master's programs:* Washington Student Achievement Council, 917 Lakeridge Way SW, Olympia, WA 98502.

- The State Office of Attorney General:
 - **Alaska:** Office of the Attorney General, 1031 West 4th Avenue, Suite 200, Anchorage, AK 99501
 - **California:** Attorney General's Office, California Department of Justice, Attn: Public Inquiry Unit, P.O. Box 944255, Sacramento, CA 94244-2550
 - **Montana:** Attorney General, 215 N Sanders St, Helena, MT 59601
 - **New Mexico:** Office of the Attorney General, 111 Lomas Blvd NW, Ste 120, Albuquerque, NM 87102
 - **Washington:** Office of the Attorney General, 1125 Washington Street SE, PO Box 40100, Olympia, WA 98504-0100

- The State Office of Consumer Affairs:
 - **Alaska:** Alaska Department of Law, Consumer Protection Unit, 1031 West 4th Avenue, Suite 200, Anchorage, AK 99501
 - **California:** Department of Consumer Affairs, Consumer Information Division, 1625 North Market Blvd., Suite N 112, Sacramento, CA 95834
 - **Montana:** Montana Department of Justice Office of Consumer Protection, 555 Fuller Avenue, Helena, MT, 59601-3394 or P. O. Box 200151, Helena, MT 59620-0151
 - **New Mexico:** Consumer Protection Division 111 Lomas Blvd NW, Ste 120, Albuquerque, NM 87102
 - **Washington:** Attorney General's Office, Consumer Resource Center, 800 Fifth Avenue, Suite 2000, Seattle, WA 98104