



## **AIRC Accepts Comments on AIRC Certified Agencies and Approved Applicants for Certification**

### **Comment Procedure**

AIRC welcomes comments regarding any of its certified agencies or any agency that is an applicant for certification. Comments may be supportive or may express concerns or complaints. All comments must be in writing and submitted through one of the channels described below. Comments or complaints that are not submitted in writing will not be accepted.

All comments will be provided to the identified agency for its review and response.

Submitted comments must meet the following guidelines in order to be considered by AIRC:

- The comment must reference a specific AIRC Certified Agency or an entity that is a current applicant for AIRC Certification or Certified agency.
- The comment must relate to agency activity that occurred after it formally applied for AIRC certification and must have arisen from event that occurred within the previous 7 years.
- The comment must be signed. Anonymous comments will not be accepted. However the individual or entity submitting the comment may request that his, her or its name or other identification be redacted when the comment is transmitted to the agency in question.
- The comment may relate to activities regardless of geographic location.
- If a complaint or concern, the comment must make specific reference to how the alleged conduct relates to either the AIRC Certification Standards (see below).
- The comment should be accompanied by supporting documentation, which may be in any form, including written, photographs, audio or video. Links to publicly accessible sites will be accepted.
- A concern or complaint that is related to a currently pending AIRC adjudication will be

referred to that process for consideration. A concern or complaint that is the subject of or related to a criminal, civil or administrative proceeding may be considered at AIRC's discretion or may be deferred pending the outcome of such proceeding.

- AIRC reserves the right to refuse to respond to or proceed with any comment that is defamatory and will not consider any comment that or contains profanity or hate speech.
- If a comment constitutes a complaint or concern and relates to conduct respecting an individual, the complainant must provide documentation that demonstrates that he or she has made a good faith effort to follow the prescribed complaint/grievance procedures of the certified agency to resolve the complaint.

In the event AIRC staff determines that a concern or complaint is related to an AIRC Certification Standard, the original comment, together with the agency's response will be provided to the Certification Commission for its review and appropriate action.

#### Reliance on Publicly Available Information Such as News Reports

As an organization whose actions are relied upon by the public, AIRC must take cognizance of any information that comes to its attention respecting the conduct, activities, integrity or reputation of a Certified Agency or of an entity that is seeking AIRC Certification.

In addition to the third party comment process, AIRC staff will review any media report that comes to its attention that reflects adversely on the conduct, activities, integrity or reputation of a Certified Agency or of an entity that is seeking AIRC Certification. If AIRC staff considers the issue raised by the media report relevant to the AIRC Certification Standards, the affected agency will be asked to provide its written comments. If, based upon review of the agency's comments AIRC staff determines that there remains the possibility of a violation of AIRC Certification Standards, the matter will be provided to the Certification Commission, together with the agency's response.

Write your comment to [Certification\[at\]airc-education.org](mailto:Certification[at]airc-education.org) or complete the form on the AIRC website.



## **Certification Standards The American International Recruitment Council**

#### **AIRC™ Certification Standards**

The Certification Standards are monitored by the AIRC Certification Commission and reviewed on a periodic basis as determined by the AIRC Board of Directors. The Certification Standards are stated declaratively and are without instruction on how the agency is to respond.

## **Standard 1: Organizational Effectiveness**

### 1.1 Mission and Purposes

Statements of mission and purpose are made public and guide the agency's planning and budgeting, including providing a framework for governance, management and communication. These purposes are further reflected in every aspect of the agency and its activities, organization, and human, financial and physical resources.

### 1.2 Governance and Ownership

The agency describes in a clear and detailed manner its ownership, governance and organization.

### 1.3 Effective Management

#### 1.3.1 Decision-Making Process

The agency is sufficiently organized to accomplish its purposes through organizational structure, policies and procedures.

#### 1.3.2 Human Resources

Employees or other people working for or on behalf of the agency are competent, well informed, reputable and act at all times in the best interest of the applicant and institutions.

Note: The term, "Agency," refers to the entity which seeks certification. The term, "Agent," is any person or an entity working on behalf of the agency.

### 1.4 Scope of Operation

1.4.1 The agency describes fully all of its activities related to international student recruitment, including its geographic scope.

1.4.2 If recruitment activities are one part of a larger organization with diverse purposes, the agency must describe how the recruitment operations function as a distinctive but fully operational unit within the larger organizational context

1.4.3 If recruitment activities are carried out by sub-agents, franchisees, or other persons employed or contracted by the agent to transact the whole, or part of the student recruitment process, the agency must describe these relationships.

### 1.5 Financial Integrity

#### 1.5.1 Financial Sustainability of the Organization

The agency manages its financial resources to maximize the agency's capability to meet its stated purposes for organizational sustainability.

#### 1.5.2 Nature of Setting and Collecting of Student Fees

The agency has a schedule of fees for services rendered student clients which is readily understood and visible to all student clients.

#### 1.5.3 Transparent Refund Policy

The agency has a refund policy which is readily understood, publicly posted and visible to all student clients.

#### 1.5.4 Handling of Student Financial Awards

The agency refrains from collecting remuneration from student clients that is conditional upon the receipt of scholarships and financial aid monies awarded by the host or receiving institution, or other scholarship awarding organizations, and is in addition to any remuneration for placement provided by contract with the host institution.

## **Standard 2: Integrity of Recruitment Process**

### 2.1 Knowledge of the U.S. Education System

Agency staff have a strong working knowledge of the education system in the United States, as well as of the specific institutional clients they serve.

### 2.2 Advertising/Marketing

The agency represents itself honestly, claims competency when demonstrable, and avoids misrepresentation.

### 2.3 Respect for Intellectual Property

The agency uses only authorized material, (including logos) from educational institutions.

### 2.4 Accountability

The agency takes full responsibility for ensuring compliance with AIRC standards with any sub-agents, franchisees, or other persons employed or contracted by the agent to transact the whole, or part of the student recruitment process.

### 2.5 Conflicts of Interest

The agency manages its relationships with institutions, organizations and students to ensure impartiality and transparency.

## 2.6 Transparency and Integrity of Services Rendered

The agency conducts itself in a transparent manner in which only truthful claims are made, and both institutions and students are served in an unbiased manner.

## 2.7 Appropriateness and Accuracy of Services Rendered

2.7.1 The agency remains updated about and follows the instruction of the U.S. Consulate in regard to immigration procedures.

2.7.2 The agency uses current information about institutions and their admissions criteria (including language proficiency), program offerings and their academic prerequisites; rate of graduation, tuition and fees; personal expenses; scholarships; health insurance; calendar and academic support services as well as support services for international students; housing opportunities; the grounds on which the student's enrollment may be deferred, suspended or discontinued; work opportunities while a student and upon graduation and other matters of importance to the student.

2.7.3 The agency provides accurate information concerning the specific nature of the institution to which a student is being recruited – such as whether study will be at the parent institution; a branch campus in or outside of the United States; by distance education; a joint degree or twinning program outside of the United States, etc.

2.7.4 The agency provides accurate information concerning the nature of the academic qualification/degree being received as per location above and degree level.

2.7.5 The agency provides accurate information related to the transferability of academic credit.

2.7.6 The agency provides accurate and current information concerning the cost of travel to the host institution.

2.7.7 Students who are under the age of 18 in the United States lack many legal rights and need special support. The agency understands the special needs of minor students and provides appropriate services.

## **Standard 3: Student and Family Engagement Pre- and Post-Enrollment**

### 3.1 Pre-Enrollment

The agency carries out its pre-enrollment services with students and their families characterized by the following:

3.1.1 There is a written legal relationship in the form of a contract or agreement with a readily understood and up-front disclosure of services and related fees.

3.1.2 The agency maintains the confidentiality of records, notes, and client information and discloses confidential information only with written consent from the student on a need-to-know basis.

3.1.3 In the case of students under the age of 18, parents/families are included in the communication process as appropriate and timely.

3.1.4 Promises or guarantees are made by the agency only when backed by facts that they will be achieved.

3.1.5 The agency demonstrates the knowledge that recruitment and admissions in the U.S. educational context are generally prohibited from discrimination based on age, race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, marital status, ethnicity, disability, socioeconomic status, or other reasons.

### 3.2 Post-Enrollment

The agency carries out its post-enrollment services with students and their families characterized by the following:

3.2.1 The agency keeps individual student records for at least three (3) years for purposes of internal evaluation and external review.

3.2.2 The agency keeps recent (within 3 years) student/family client satisfaction records on file for purposes of external review.

## **Standard 4: Institutional Engagement Pre- and Post-Recruitment**

### 4.1 Pre-Recruitment

The agency only contracts with or places students at U.S. educational institutions whose accreditation is recognized by the U.S. Department of Education or Council on Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA).

Characteristics of these services shall include the following:

4.1.1 There is a written legal relationship in the form of a contract or agreement which clearly states the nature of the partnership, scope of respective roles and responsibilities, quality assurance measures to be implemented and method of monitoring the contractual obligations (such as an annual report to the institution on the results of recruitment practices or other mutually agreed stipulations).

4.1.2 The agency maintains regular contact with institutions which enables consistent and timely communication.

4.1.3 The agency maintains the confidentiality of the relationship between institution and agency as agreed.

4.1.4 The agency provides legitimate documents to institutions which are properly notarized or attested as to their authenticity.

4.1.5 The agency does not knowingly provide false or misleading records of student academic achievement, preparation, and financial capability. Further, the agency ensures that essays and/or statement of purpose are originally created by the student to whom they are attributed.

4.2 Post-Recruitment

4.2.1 The agency keeps recent (within 3 years) institutional client satisfaction records on file for purposes of external review.

**Standard 5: Complaints Process**

The agency has an internal mechanism for processing complaints and making necessary changes in the nature of recruiting services as needed.