CRITERIA TO DETERMINE ELIGIBILITY TO PARTICIPATE
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I. The Organization

A. The general purpose of the training program or the general purpose of the organization itself is compatible with the mission of the American Council on Education (ACE) Center for Education Attainment and Innovation.

Guidelines:

- Mission and vision statements, promotional materials, marketing brochures, or other documentation should demonstrate the organization’s potential to participate in a program designed to increase access to further postsecondary study.
- Tuition assistance, scholarships, student loans, employee training, and other organizational programs are reflective of a commitment to lifelong learning and access to further postsecondary study.

Required Practice:
Organizations must be able to demonstrate that participation in the ACE College Credit Recommendation Service (CREDIT®) program has the potential to promote and increase adult learner access to further postsecondary education.

B. Intended learning outcomes must be aligned with postsecondary programs of study.

Guideline:
- The CREDIT Content Review Committee examines course descriptions, course syllabi, lesson plans, and other curriculum materials to crosswalk identified learning outcomes with the taxonomy of instructional program classifications published by the U.S. Department of Education.
Required Practice:
Learning outcomes must be similar in nature to the course content found in one of four postsecondary education categories: technical/vocational/certificate, associate, baccalaureate, or graduate.

C. The course provider is easily identified as a properly licensed organization with a demonstrated history of bona fide operations.

Guidelines:
CREDIT relies on public information, including *Dun and Bradstreet Business Information Reports*, to examine organizational profiles.

In some cases, organizations will be asked to provide evidence of incorporation, licensure, or accreditation by relevant state and government authorities; verified payment performance; resolutions of any investigations; and a list of public filings.

Required Practices:
The enterprise must be a real, active, and operating commercial or entrepreneurial undertaking that produces services or goods. The enterprise must meet applicable legal requirements for doing business in respective jurisdictions and be in good standing.

The organizational profile, history, operations, payment performance, and public filings must indicate that the organization:
- Is responsible in its payment procedures
- Has the assets to repay debts or provide collateral if necessary
- Has the character and background to stand behind its business transactions

D. The organization has been fully engaged in enrolling learners and delivering courses and programs for at least two years.

ACE, in its sole discretion, may waive this requirement for the purpose of conducting pilot evaluations of innovative education programs. Any organization wishing to participate in a pilot must provide a written justification statement outlining why ACE should grant a waiver, specifically addressing how the organization’s participation in the CREDIT program will promote adult learner access to postsecondary education.

Guidelines:
- Organizations should be prepared to provide evidence of being fully engaged in enrolling learners and delivering training courses and programs for at least two years.
- Evidence is most often presented in the form of a verifiable historical record of learner enrollments, course schedules, and course completion data.

Required Practice:
Organizations must be able to provide evidence of learner enrollment and training delivery. Evidence should include:
- Catalogs, bulletins, or brochures; promotional material; and advertisements
- Learner records showing admission/start date(s), record of progress, termination, or completion
II. Learning Outcomes and Evaluation Tools

A. Course and program objectives are clearly defined and simply stated. The character, nature, quality, value, source of instruction, and training services indicate the benefits of participation to reasonably diligent learners.

Guidelines:
- Training objectives for each course or program should be simply stated and understandable to potential enrollees. Advertisements and promotional materials should be consistent with training objectives.
- Materials should describe to learners exactly what knowledge, skills, and/or attitudes they are expected to achieve/demonstrate as a result of the learning program.

Required Practices:
- Outcome statements are clear, concise, and measurable
- Learners are informed of intended learning outcomes prior to and during the learning program
- Written learning outcomes, which reflect what learners will achieve by the end of the learning experience, are prominent in advertisements and promotional materials

B. Examinations and other evaluative techniques adequately measure achievement of the stated learning objectives.

Guidelines:
- Assessment of learning outcomes refers to specific processes through which learners demonstrate the attainment of learning outcomes.
- In every learning program for which academic credit recommendations are desired, the provider must require learners to demonstrate that they have attained the learning outcomes.
- A passing grade of 70 percent or higher is required. Graduate-level credit recommendations will normally require a passing grade of no less than 80 percent.
- Assessments may take diverse forms, such as performance demonstrations under real or simulated conditions, written or oral examinations, written reports, completion of a project, self-assessment, or oral or written tests that may include locally or externally developed standardized examinations.

Required Practices:
- Assessment methods are measurable or observable, clearly stated, and focused on the performance of the learner.
- The learning provider systematically and appropriately assesses the performance of learners in terms of intended learning outcomes.
- Learners are informed in advance that learning outcomes will be assessed.
- Passing levels are clearly articulated to students.
- Proper safeguards are in place for protecting examination materials, and processes are in place to assure firm identification of the learner and rigid control of test conditions.
III. Instructional and Training Development Personnel

A. Instructors, learning facilitators, curriculum developers, and training development staff possess appropriate qualifications and experience in their positions and roles.

Guidelines:
- Expertise in subject content and instructional methodologies is used in developing learning programs.
- Individuals involved in program planning understand and utilize learning outcomes in planning and development.
- Instructors and learning facilitators should be able to provide evidence that they:
  - Are competent in the subject matter
  - Understand the learning program’s purpose and learning outcomes
  - Have knowledge and skill in instructional methods and learning processes

Required Practices:
- The organization has stated policies and criteria for instructors, learning facilitators, and training and development employees.
- The organization maintains files containing qualifications, including copies of résumés and applicable credentials.
- Qualified individuals are directly involved in determining the learning program purpose and in planning, designing, developing, conducting, and evaluating each learning experience.
- Instructional staff demonstrates high standards of professional conduct and does not discriminate against learners on the basis of gender, age, socioeconomic or ethnic background, sexual orientation, or disability.

B. Instructors are regularly evaluated to determine evidence of teaching effectiveness.

Guidelines:
Instructor effectiveness is demonstrated through the use of learner evaluations, syllabi and instructional support materials, individual teaching portfolios, or other widely accepted methods.

Instructors are provided feedback on their performance.

Required Practice:
Methods are employed to ensure that instructors are reasonably and consistently effective in meeting learning outcomes and learner expectations.
IV. Academic Records

A. Learner records are accurate, confidentiality is ensured, and access is appropriate.

Guidelines:

- Specific efforts should be made to ensure that the records are protected from breach, theft, vandalism, fire, and flooding.
- Internal audits of the records of those who either have attended or are attending the institution should be conducted on a regular basis.
- Databases, forms, stationery, institutional seals, diplomas, signature and certification stamps, and other supplies and equipment should be secured.
- Data, including backup tapes, security dump tapes, and extra copies of microfilm, should be stored in secure locations as a safeguard against destruction or damage, system failure, and any man-made or natural disasters.
- Computer-generated transcripts, letters, certifications, and other similar documents should be protected by stringent data processing systems security, specified office security techniques, and auditing processes.

Required Practices:

- The organization has a systematic process in place for securely maintaining learner files and records.
- Learner records provide accurate course participation, learning assessment results, and course completion data.
- A systematic process is used for identifying individuals who satisfactorily complete courses and programs.
- The ability to make changes to learner records is limited to staff directly responsible for establishing and maintaining learner data.
- There is a written policy regarding the retention and release of learner records.
- Administrator and instructor records include résumés.

B. Instructional and training development staff records are accurate, confidentiality is ensured, and access is appropriate.

Guidelines:

- Specific efforts should be made to ensure that the records office is physically secure from theft, vandalism, fire, and flooding.
- Internal audits of the records of current staff should be conducted on a regular basis.

Required Practices:

- The organization has a systematic process in place for securely maintaining staff files and records.
- Instructor and administrator records include résumés, curriculum vitae, certifications, and/or credentials.
V. Learning Environment

A. The learning environment supports and enhances the attainment of necessary knowledge and skills.

Required Practices:
- The learning environment is appropriate to the learning activity and course delivery.
- The learning facilities, resources, and equipment are easily accessible and appropriately available to learners.

B. Learners receive a complete learning experience that meets their needs, including opportunities for effective interaction with instructional and administrative staff.

Guideline:
- Instructors and administrators are available to provide support to learners in addition to the course delivery.

Required Practice:
- Learners are provided with reasonable access to administrative and instructional services.

ACE, in its sole discretion, reserves the right to refuse to work with any organization it deems unfit for any reason, without the need to provide justification.