



ACCREDITING COUNCIL FOR CONTINUING EDUCATION & TRAINING
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September 1, 2016

VIA EMAIL & FEDERAL EXPRESS
(dcfaltot@hotmail.com)

Mr. David Faltot, Director
Elite Language Institute, LLC
1130 Trinity Mills Pkwy
Carrollton, TX 75006

***Re: Reaccreditation Denied
(Appealable, Not a Final Action)
ACCET ID #1355***

Dear Mr. Faltot,

This letter is to inform you that, at its August 2016 meeting, the Accrediting Commission of the Accrediting Council for Continuing Education & Training (ACCET) voted to deny reaccreditation to Elite Language Institute, located in Carrollton, Texas.

The decision was based upon a careful review and evaluation of the record, including the institution's Analytic Self-Evaluation Report (ASER), the on-site visit team report (visit conducted June 6-7, 2016), and the institution's response to that report, dated July 28, 2016. It is noted for the record that an Institutional Show Cause directive was initiated at the April 2016 Commission meeting based on the institution's continued failure to resolve serious issues identified during the February 26, 2015 Quality Assurance Visit relative to the requirement for appropriate and timely student refunds and successful student outcomes. As a result of the Show Cause directive, the institution was required to show cause why its accreditation should not be withdrawn and was required to submit an additional interim report for review at the August 2016 meeting. Upon Commission review at the August meeting, of the institution's team report and response, and the most recent interim report (received May 27, 2016) the Commission determined that the institution has not adequately demonstrated compliance with respect to ACCET standards, policies, and procedures, relative to the following findings:

1. Standard I.A: Mission

The institution did not demonstrate that it is successfully meeting its mission. The team report indicated that the institution measures its success in meeting its mission through a variety of means including student advancement, number of students transferring to attend two-year and four-year colleges or universities, and demonstrated academic improvement when comparing exit exam

results with initial placement scores. While the institution claimed to be meeting its goals for success with 83% of its students transferring out of the program, a review of student advancement rates showed that only 64.4% advanced to their next level while the rest either repeated their level or transferred out of the school. A review of exit test score improvement showed that only 32% of the students demonstrated improvement of three points or greater.

The institution's response indicated that the exit exam administered to students did not measure speaking or writing components, and that the test was not taken seriously by students as it was at the end of the program and did not affect a student's grade or outcome. The institution indicated that it was looking for a new exit test to implement that would better assess its students' proficiency, but provided no evidence of progress made towards implementing a new, more reliable testing instrument. The institution also indicated that it has changed its student start dates to be within the first two weeks of the 16 week session to ensure more learning and progress within the session, as opposed to the institution's prior open enrollment system which placed students in a level at any given point in the schedule. The institution provided no supporting documentation by way of admissions procedures or marketing materials to demonstrate that this change has been implemented. The institution further indicated that the mission is scheduled to be re-evaluated at the end of the year. The institution did not demonstrate systematic or effective implementation of a revised exit testing instrument or its admissions scheduling revision to better evaluate the success of its students in relation to the success of its mission.

Therefore, the institution failed to demonstrate compliance with this standard.

2. Standard II-A: Governance

The institution did not demonstrate that its management structure ensures the integrity and effectiveness of the institution and its compliance with statutory, regulatory, and accreditation requirements. The team report indicated inconsistencies regarding the institution's program hours. The Pronunciation Program is listed as being a program of 288 hours with ACCET and SEVP, but the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) exemption letter lists it as being offered FREE and does not have specified hours. The team found that students pay \$15 an hour for this course and the clock hours could not be validated as the institution did not provide a curriculum for this course. The TOEFL program indicates two 288-hour parts as approved by SEVP and the TWC, but it is listed as one 288-hour course with ACCET. The TWC lists a 288-hour GRE course, whereas this program is not listed with ACCET or SEVP. The ACCET approved course *Communication and Debate* is listed as *Communications* by the TWC and SEVP and is listed as *Communication* on the institution's website. It is noted that the institution's exemption letter from TWC has granted exemption based on the program offerings provided by the institution, and directs the institution to notify the agency if any changes to courses occur. Further, the institution's I-17 lists the following programs which are not offered at Elite Language Institute and have not been approved by ACCET: Spanish 1, Microsoft Excel, Microsoft PowerPoint, Microsoft Frontpage, and Quickbooks.

Additionally, the DSO listed on the I-17 form, [REDACTED], does not appear to be an employee of the institution, was not listed on ACCET Document 21 – Personnel File Checklist, and does not appear on the organizational chart.

The team report further noted that the institution posed barriers to students transferring to another educational institution, including the requirement that students maintain 80% attendance or better in their classes, maintain 70% academic performance or better, not have an outstanding tuition balance, submit an acceptance letter from the transferring institution, and complete the exit test and exit survey. The Commission notes that these conditions are against SEVP and ACCET regulations as they unduly limit a student's ability to transfer.

In its response, the institution indicated that it has notified the TWC of the adjustments in course names and length to mirror ACCET approval. Evidence of this communication was provided, but no response from the TWC was provided. The institution also attempted to update the institution's I-17; however as the institution's PDSO is incarcerated, the institution claims that it is unable to make changes to the I-17.

The institution also included a revised transfer-out policy; however, barriers still remain. The institution requires that a student maintain 80% attendance or better in their class, maintain 70% academic performance or better, and not have a tuition balance in order to transfer in good status. Additionally, the policy indicates that "the SEVIS records of all transfer out students are released at the end of each session on the last Friday of every month," implying that a student can only transfer out at the end of the session, whereas SEVP requires an institution to allow a student to transfer to another educational institution at any time.

The institution did not demonstrate that it is in compliance with state, federal and accreditation requirements. Therefore, the institution failed to demonstrate compliance with this standard.

3. Standard II-C: Personnel Management

The institution did not demonstrate that management develops, implements, and maintains overall written policies and procedures for the systematic and effective recruitment, selection, hiring, and retention of all personnel. The team report indicated that the high rate of administrative staff turnover resulted in a number of shortcomings in the areas of records, refunds, student academic progress, attendance, governance, and recruitment.

In its response, the institution indicated that formally documented processes and procedures as well as a comprehensive governance manual have been provided to staff and faculty. Individual one-on-one training sessions with the administrative staff have been conducted to familiarize them with the institution's policies and procedures. However, the institution did not provide copies of these policies and procedures, documentation to evidence staff training of these policies, or evidence of implementation of these procedures by administrative staff. While the institution provided information relative to its current management staff, it provided no rationale as to turn-

over rates and no additional information regarding efforts to retain its current staff.

The institution's response indicated that the institution is working towards streamlining its three database/record keeping systems into one record keeping system by the end of 2016, but provided no additional information regarding the planning process or progress made toward selection and transition to a single record keeping system.

Therefore, the institution failed to demonstrate compliance with this standard.

4. Standard II-D: Records

The institution did not demonstrate that it has an organized record-keeping system that ensures all records are maintained in an accurate, orderly, and up-to-date manner and that the record-keeping system facilitates ready access and review of those records by appropriate parties. The team report indicated that a number of personnel and student files were either incomplete, missing, or inaccurate. The team report included detailed issues for three student files ([REDACTED], and [REDACTED]) and 10 personnel files [REDACTED], and [REDACTED]).

In its response, the institution indicated that, prior to April 2016, not all paperwork had been filled out appropriately. After April 2016, when appropriately qualified staff were hired and trained, paperwork was completed timely and accurately. The institution provided copies of revised ACCET Document 6 – Faculty and Administrative Personnel Form for six staff members as well as evidence of qualifications for some faculty. However, not all issues were resolved as there was no evidence of [REDACTED]'s prior language teaching experience or [REDACTED]'s education credentials. Further, the institution did not provide revised documentation for the three students noted as having an incomplete enrollment agreement ([REDACTED]) and missing signatures of the Applications for Change of Visa ([REDACTED]). No additional policies and procedures were provided to demonstrate any change to current record keeping processes to ensure that records were consistently complete, accurate, and up-to-date.

Therefore, the institution failed to demonstrate compliance with this standard.

5. Standard III-B: Financial Procedures

The institution did not demonstrate that tuition charges are applied fairly and consistently; that receipt of tuition payments and other monies is properly recorded and tracked; and that cancellation and refund policies are written, fair and equitable, are consistently administered, and comply with statutory, regulatory, and accreditation requirements.

The team report indicated that three different application rates and three different tuition rates were used for students enrolling in the same program at the same time, which does not

demonstrate fair and equitable tuition and fees as required by the standard. The Student Handbook refers to students being able to pay monthly. It also states that a late fee of \$35 per month will be charged; however, this fee is not disclosed on the Student Application or the Enrollment Agreement. Further, nine student files reviewed were missing required information needed to verify if the student's refund has been properly calculated and processed in a timely manner ([REDACTED]).

In its response, the institution indicated that it has changed the tuition rate for the program to \$500 per month (\$2,000 a term) for all full-time students. Further, beginning August 29, 2016, tuition will no longer be charged in monthly installments, but instead students can pay tuition for the term before the term begins, or pay for half of the term (\$1,000) before the term begins and pay the remaining tuition (\$1,000) at the midpoint of the term. While the revised tuition and payment options were updated in the student handbook and on the application forms; no evidence of implementation was provided. The institution further revised all refund calculation worksheets for the students noted in the weakness; however, no supporting documentation was provided to verify the accuracy of the new refund calculation.

Additionally, the institution was required to submit an interim report, as noted in the April 27, 2016 Commission action letter, to address six outstanding issues relative to this standard, of which the institution did not resolve. In its response, the institution indicated that it has hired an outside programmer to create and manage its accounting system; however no documentation was provided to evidence a contract with the programmer, progress made towards completion of a new accounting system, or evidence of use of the new accounting system.

The institution's revised procedures for processing refunds indicates that students who withdraw at any point in the first four weeks of any session are not refunded for the first four weeks. The Commission notes that ACCET Document 31.ESOL – Cancellation and Refund Policy allows an institution to keep the first for week of the initial session, but not for any subsequent sessions.

The institution's interim report response provided refund documentation for ten students as directed by the Commission. The Commission notes that the documentation provided is incomplete and does not validate the accuracy of refund calculations provided by the institution. By way of example, the documentation for [REDACTED] does not include a complete enrollment agreement, as no costs/fees are filled in and no signature of school official is included. Further, no student ledger was provided to determine the amount the student owed and paid. The attendance records provided are only for two weeks: 5/2-5/5 and 5/9-5/12; however, the enrollment agreement indicates that the student was scheduled to start class on March 28, 2016. The information provided was insufficient for the Commission to discern if the refund had been calculated correctly. Additionally, the enrollment agreement provided for [REDACTED] is from 2013 with no start or end date noted, no student ledger was provided, and only partial attendance records were provided, making the refund calculation impossible to

verify. Further, the enrollment agreement for [REDACTED] does not include an end date, no tuition or fees are listed, no school representative signature is included in the enrollment agreement, no student ledger was provided, and no evidence that the refund check was sent to the student was provided for Commission review to determine if the refund was accurately calculated and processed.

Finally, the institution's interim report provided updated information regarding three students noted in the previous Commission Action letter, yet the institution's submission remains incomplete for two students. The institution's previous interim report indicated that [REDACTED] did not receive a full refund because he attended one day of class, but the attendance records provided in the most recent interim report indicate that the student did not attend any class, and therefore should have received a full refund. No revised refund calculation or proof of refund was provided. Information for [REDACTED] demonstrates that the student did not attend class. However, the refund provided was only \$400 out of the \$500 paid. The institution indicates that it does not put charges on the enrollment agreement but gives students the total costs when they come to class, contrary to the requirements of Standard VII-B. Enrollment which require students to confirm the tuition and fees as part of the enrollment agreement/application. The institution noted that it is unable to provide copies of checks to demonstrate refunds processed as the only individual with access to the bank accounts is "unreachable until March 2017."

The Commission noted that since the institution's Quality Assurance Visit conducted in the April 2015 cycle, serious issues have been identified regarding the institution's capabilities to track, record, and process financial payments and refunds. Over the course of the past year, the institution has failed to provide clear, accurate, and consistent information to demonstrate accurate and timely implementation of an ACCET-compliant cancellation and refund policy.

Therefore, the institution has failed to demonstrate compliance with this standard.

6. Standard VI-A: Educational Goals and Objectives

The institution did not demonstrate that all programs and courses have appropriate educational goals and objectives; and that the curricular content and learning experiences are preplanned and present a sound, systematic, and sequential educational methodology. As referenced under Standard II-A. Governance, the team report indicated that the institution's Pronunciation and Accent Reduction class was approved as an ACCET program for 288 hours, but did not have a set curriculum, assessment process, syllabi, designated textbook, or lesson plans. At the time of the visit, this class was offered as a means of making-up class in order to erase prior absences. Students were required to purchase a \$15.00 voucher to take the pronunciation class for one hour. The team report referenced a sign that read, "*You must purchase a \$15.00 Pronunciation Voucher from the front office before you may enter Pronunciation class.*" All students in the pronunciation class were making up prior absences. It is noted that ACCET Document 35 – Attendance Policy requires that attendance make-up must be educationally sound and requires make-up to be comparable to the content, time, and delivery of the classes missed.

In its response, the institution indicated that the Pronunciation and Accent Reduction program will be offered as approved by ACCET. The institution provided a sample syllabus which indicated that the program will begin August 29, 2016. Sample lesson plans were also provided; however, a complete curriculum was not included in the institution's response. Further, the institution indicated that it will change its make-up policy effective August 29, 2016 to allow students to make-up attendance by attending "*an 'alternate class' which can ONLY be the same class they are enrolled in, but offered at a different time. These can be done a maximum of four times a month, and only if they miss their regular class on the same day.*" However, the institution did not provide evidence of a revised policy; documentation that the revised policy has been distributed to staff, faculty, and students; or evidence that the policy has been implemented.

Therefore, the institution failed to demonstrate compliance with this standard.

7. Standard VI.C: Instructor Orientation and Training

The institution did not demonstrate that it implements an ongoing professional development schedule for instructional personnel that is systematically implemented, monitored, and documented. The team report indicated that there was no documentation of professional development training sessions. The institution did not provide a list of 2015 professional development activities with signed attendance/sign-in sheets and agenda. The institution did not provide a list of upcoming scheduled professional development activities. The institution indicated that professional training took place at the monthly faculty training session, but minutes from those meetings evidenced only one faculty meeting with updates and discussion, but no evidence of professional development.

In its response, the institution confirmed that there were no professional development activities offered in 2015. The institution provided a schedule of professional development for 2017; however this schedule only indicates the dates of training, but does not included the topic, presenter, or objective of the trainings noted. Also, the institution provided evidence of membership applications to TXTESOL for all faculty; however, proof of membership, evidence of participation, or documentation of the association's benefits were not provided. The institution indicated that it has offered one professional development session on July 15, 2016 that consisted of a publishing representative training faculty on the use of "myenglishlab," an online resource offered by Pearson. The institution provided a sign-in sheet as evidence of attendance. However, no agenda, summary, or copy of the presentation was provided to evidence the content of the training. The institution did not demonstrate that professional development for faculty is systematically and effectively implemented.

Therefore, the institution failed to demonstrate compliance with this standard.

8. Standard VIII.A: Student Progress

The institution did not demonstrate that it effectively monitors, assesses, and records the progress of participants utilizing a sound assessment system with a set of defined elements that are appropriately related to the performance objectives of the programs or courses. The team report indicated that “a student may choose to repeat a level one time, even if they attained a passing grade, with teacher permission.” No documentation was provided to evidence the instructor’s rationale for approving a level repeat with passing grades. The institution did not have a complete satisfactory student progress policy. While parts of such a policy appear in different places in the student handbook, they are incomplete, as the probation for attendance and academic reasons does not specify terms or conditions, length of probation, student’s status during that period, or the consequences for failure to meet those terms of probation. The institution does not publish the requirement that the maximum total length of the language training cannot exceed 36 months, nor does it publish an appeals policy, as required by ACCET Document 18.IEP – Student Progress Policy. Additionally, four student files were cited in the team report, as the files indicated that the student had not met academic or attendance requirements, but no evidence of probation was provided ([REDACTED]).

In its response, the institution provided a revised satisfactory academic progress policy as published in the institution’s most recent catalog. While the SAP policy includes both a qualitative and quantitative measure, the details of the policy are still incomplete, unclear, or out of compliance. For example, the policy indicates that “*student who pass the class will NOT be able to complete the level if they score higher than 89% OR do not have the level repeat form signed by their teacher and the Curriculum Director.*” While the Commission asserts that this is likely a typo, and refers to repeating a level, instead of completing a level, it is not clearly articulated to students. The policy includes failure to make tuition payments as part of its SAP probation, which does not comply with the standard’s requirement that progress is appropriately related to the performance objectives of the programs or courses. It is further noted that the institution’s policy is unclear relative to excused absences, as it notes that “*students who experience a serious illness or injury may provide a dated letter or form signed by a medical professional indicating that the student was seen for medical reasons during the time missed,*” suggesting that a doctor’s note will excuse the absence. It is not clear if this absence is still recorded in the student’s overall attendance, as required by ACCET Document 35 Attendance Policy, which states that “excused absences will count as absences in the calculation of attendance rates and will not increase the maximum number of allowable absences.”

The institution further provided a blank copy of the institution’s learning plan template and formal request form to repeat a level; however, as these forms are blank, they do not demonstrate implementation of the new system. Further, the institution provided no current or former student information to demonstrate implementation of the revised policies.

Therefore, the institution failed to demonstrate compliance with this standard.

9. Standard VIII-B: Attendance

The institution did not demonstrate that it establishes and implements written policies and procedures for monitoring and documenting attendance, or that its attendance policy is effective in ensuring that student participation and preparation are consistent with the expected performance outcomes of the course or program. The team report indicated that the institution allows students to make-up for attendance by buying pronunciation class hours, as noted in Standard II.A – Governance. The attendance policy also allows for excused absences, as noted in Standard VIII.B – Student Progress. The institution’s published tardy and early departure policy varies, as the ASER indicated that it is based on five minutes and the student handbook states that it is based on ten minutes. The institution’s ASER further indicated that attendance is tracked based on time, yet the attendance sheets completed by instructors indicate only a check mark or “A” for absence, but do not include the time of arrival or departure. Further, the team report noted that class attendance observed during the team visit was dramatically low. At any one time, 55-76% of the scheduled students were absent.

Further, the team report indicates that the institution requires students who take vacation to pay for one or three months tuition before vacation is granted. Additionally, students may apply for a Temporary Absence in which they pay for that time away, but are counted as being present. By way of example, ██████████ requested a three week break for dental work in her home country. The form states, *“I understand that since, if authorized, this break is not a vacation. Therefore, I am financially responsible to pay for the time I am not attending school so that my status remains active.”* The institution does not include this information in the Student Handbook or in the Governance Manual. The wording implies that the student is paying for class time that they will not be attending. If this is a Leave of Absence form, there should be policies and procedures should to process that request in line with SEVP regulations without obligating the student for time they will not be able to attend.

In its response, the institution indicated that as of August 29, 2016 it will no longer allow make-up classes. However, the Commission notes that the institution indicated as a response to Standard IV-A. Educational Goals and Objectives, that the institution will allow students to make-up attendance by attending *“an ‘alternate class’ which can ONLY be the same class they are enrolled in, but offered at a different time,”* contrary to the response to this standard.

The institution indicated that excused absences were discontinued immediately following the site visit in June 2016; however the reissued student handbook still notes that *“if you want your absence to be forgiven, you must show your teacher and personnel at the front office documentation of the emergency situation that caused your absence.”*

The institution further indicated that instructors record attendance by noting “P” for present and “A” for absent. Specific times in and out are only recorded for late arrivals or early departures. The institution indicated in its narrative response that it submitted examples of this recording system, but none were provided.

The institution revised its vacation and Leave of Absence (LOA) policy to eliminate the

requirement for paid tuition during the time the student was not registered for classes. The institution provided a revised LOA Request Form; however, no completed LOA or vacation requests were provided to demonstrate implementation of the policy and forms.

The institution indicated that attendance was low during the time of the visits because many students were on vacation, noting that students on vacation remain on the class roster and are noted as absent by the instructor. However, the institution provided no student information to demonstrate how many students were on vacation at the time of the team visit, nor did it provide student vacation documentation to validate this claim.

Therefore, the institution failed to demonstrate compliance with this standard.

10. Standard VIII.C: Participant Satisfaction

The institution did not demonstrate that open lines of communication with participants exist and demonstrate responsiveness to student issues; that written policies and procedures are followed that provide an effective means to regularly assess, document, and validate student satisfaction relative to the quality of education and training offered, as well as the student services provided; or that interim evaluations and a final evaluation upon completion of the term of enrollment are specified components of determining participant satisfaction. The team report indicated that the institution did not document student satisfaction for the last term of 2015 and the first term of 2016, noting that this feedback would have proved valuable given that the institution had such high staff turnover. Additionally, surveys completed prior to the last term in 2015 failed to include areas relative to the quality of education and training offered as well as the student services provided. Further, the summary combined twelve distinct areas into one global area – average student satisfaction, thus making the data less meaningful and impeding the institution's ability to identify and respond to specific areas of student dissatisfaction.

In its response, the institution provide survey summaries for the last term of 2015 and first term of 2016, but did not provide an explanation as to why this information was not made available to the ACCET team. The institution indicated that "Looking over the survey numbers, it can be seen that the recurring change in administrative staff has impacted student satisfaction." However, the institution provided no evidence that any changes were considered or implemented based on the survey data. Further, the institution has created a new end of program survey that will be implemented in Term 3 (December 2016) and new end of term surveys, the first of which will be implemented in mid-August 2016. The institution provided copies of these revised blank surveys, but did not demonstrate implementation of the new forms, and therefore could not demonstrate analysis of the feedback results.

Therefore, the institution failed to demonstrate compliance with this standard.

Since denial of reaccreditation is an adverse action by the Accrediting Commission, the institution may appeal the decision. The full procedures and guidelines for appealing the decision are outlined

in Document 11, Policies and Practices of the Accrediting Commission, which is available on our website at www.accet.org.

If the institution wishes to appeal the decision, the Commission must receive written notification no later than fifteen (15) calendar days from receipt of this letter, in addition to a certified or cashier's check in the amount of \$8,500.00, payable to ACCET, for an appeals hearing. This notification must be accompanied by an affidavit signed by an authorized representative of the institution indicating that a Notice of Status of Accreditation notifying interested parties of the Commission's adverse action has been disseminated to new enrollees and posted in conspicuous places at the institution to include, at minimum, the admissions office and student lounge or comparable location. In addition, the institution must submit a written teach-out plan that is in accordance with ACCET Document 32 – Closing/Teach-Out Policy.

In the case of an appeal, a written statement, plus six (6) additional copies regarding the grounds for the appeal, saved as **PDF documents and copied to individual flash drives**, must be submitted to the ACCET office within sixty (60) calendar days from receipt of this letter. The appeal process allows for the institution to provide clarification of and/or new information regarding the conditions at the institution at the time the Accrediting Commission made its decision to deny or withdraw accreditation. The appeal process does not allow for consideration of changes that have been made by or at the institution or new information created or obtained after the Commission's action to deny or withdraw accreditation, except under such circumstances when the Commission's adverse action included a finding of non-compliance with Standard III-A, Financial Stability, whereupon the Appeals Panel may consider, on a one-time basis only, such financial information provided all of the following conditions are met:

- The only remaining deficiency cited by the Commission in support of a final adverse action decision is the institution's failure to meet ACCET Standard III-A, Financial Stability, with the institution's non-compliance with Standard III-A the sole deficiency warranting a final adverse action.
- The financial information was unavailable to the institution until after the Commission's decision was made and is included in the written statement of the grounds for appeal submitted in accordance with the ACCET appeals process; and
- The financial information provided is significant and bears materially on the specified financial deficiencies identified by the Commission.

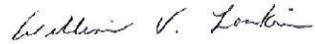
The Appeals Panel shall apply such criteria of significance and materiality as established by the Commission. Further, any determination made by the Appeals Panel relative to this new financial information shall not constitute a basis for further appeal.

Elite Language Institute, LLC

September 1, 2016

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Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "William V. Larkin".

William V. Larkin, Ed.D.

Executive Director

WVL/lao

CC: Mr. Herman Bounds, Chief, Accreditation Division, US ED (aslrecordsmanager@ed.gov)
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