



Bureau for Private Postsecondary Education
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APPEAL OF CITATION INFORMAL CONFERENCE
DECISION: CITATION MODIFIED

June 10, 2020

Sofia University, SPC, Owner
Sofia University
1069 East Meadow Circle
Palo Alto, CA 94303

Date of Issuance	Citation Number	Institution Code
June 10, 2020	1920183	79461402

On April 2, 2020, an informal telephone conference was held in the matter of Citation: Assessment of Fine and Order of Abatement No. 1929183 (Citation) against Sofia University, SPC, Owner of Sofia University (Institution). In attendance were Beth Scott, Enforcement Chief, Mark Sigman, Provost and Chief Academic Officer, Mark Robinson, Institutional Research Director, and Keith Zakarin, Attorney.

Pursuant to Business and Professions Code, section 125.9; California Education Code, section 94936; and Title 5 of the California Code of Regulations, section 75020 and section 75040, the Bureau for Private Postsecondary Education (Bureau) renders the following decision relative to your appeal of the Citation No. 1920183.

It is the decision of the Enforcement Chief that on May 15, 2020, Citation No. 1920183 is modified and makes the following change(s):

VIOLATION CODE SECTIONS

#	Below you will find the California Education Code (CEC) and/or Title 5 of the California Code of Regulations (5, CCR code) section(s) of law you are charged with violating.
1.	<p><u>Violation:</u> 5, CCR Section 74110 (a-d) – Annual Report <i>“(a) The annual report required by section 94934 of the Code shall include the information required by section 94929.5 and 94934 for all educational programs offered in the prior calendar year. (b) In addition to the information required by section 94934 and this section provided under penalty of perjury, the institution shall have annual financial statements prepared for the institution's prior fiscal year and signed under penalty of perjury, and shall submit a hard copy under separate cover of such statements in conjunction with its annual report. The form, content and mode of preparation of financial statements shall comply with Section 74115 of this Division. The Bureau may request that the institution immediately make available for inspection to a representative of the Bureau, these financial statements at the offices of the institution. (c) An institution shall file its annual report by December 1st. The Bureau may extend the period for filing if the institution demonstrates evidence of substantial need but in no case longer than 60 days. The institution shall not change the date of its filing its annual</i></p>

report because of a change in the fiscal year without the Bureau's approval. (d) The annual report shall be electronically filed by submitting the information required by section 94934 of the Code and this section via the online form provided on the Bureau's website, electronically attaching, as directed, the School Performance Fact Sheet, the enrollment agreement, and the school catalog".

CEC Section 94934(a)(1-9) - Annual Report

"(a) As part of the compliance program, an institution shall submit an annual report to the bureau, under penalty of perjury, signed by a responsible corporate officer, by July 1 of each year, or another date designated by the bureau, and it shall include the following information for educational programs offered in the reporting period:

(1) The total number of students enrolled by level of degree or for a diploma.

(2) The number of degrees, by level, and diplomas awarded.

(3) The degree levels and diplomas offered.

(4) The Student Performance Fact Sheet, as required pursuant to Section 94910.

(5) The school catalog, as required pursuant to Section 94909.

(6) The total charges for each educational program by period of attendance.

(7) A statement indicating whether the institution is, or is not, current in remitting Student Tuition Recovery Fund assessments.

(8) A statement indicating whether an accrediting agency has taken any final disciplinary action against the institution.

(9) Additional information deemed by the bureau to be reasonably required to ascertain compliance with this chapter".

As of November 14, 2019, the Bureau has not received an annual report for the year 2017 from the Institution.

Order of Abatement:

The Bureau orders the Institution to submit its annual report in accordance with 5, CCR section 74110 (a-d) and CEC section 94934(a)(1-9). The Institution shall submit following:

2017 Annual Report

- Complete and submit the 2017 Annual Report via the Bureau's Online Annual Report Submission Portal website at https://bppe.ca.gov/annual_report/.
- A hard copy of the financial statements for year-end 2017 must be submitted via regular mail to the Bureau for Private Postsecondary Education, P.O. Box 980818, West Sacramento, CA 95833.

New Order of Abatement: The Bureau orders the Institution to continue to work with the Bureau's Annual Report Unit regarding the submission of the 2017 Annual Report.

Assessment of Fine

The fine for this violation is \$5,000.00

Reason for modification: New substantive facts were presented at the informal conference.

The administrative fine for this violation has been modified from \$5,000.00 to \$500.00. On February 24, 2020, the payment of fine was satisfied.

2.

Violation:

5, CCR Section 76130 (a-e)- Collection and Submission of Assessments

"(a) A qualifying institution shall collect the assessment from each student in an educational program at the time it collects the first payment from or on behalf of the student at or after enrollment. The assessment shall be collected for the entire period of enrollment, regardless of whether the student pays the institutional charges in increments.

(b) A qualifying institution shall complete the STRF Assessment Reporting Form (Rev. 2/10) and remit it with the STRF assessments collected from students to be received by the Bureau no later than the last day of the month following the close of the quarter as follows:

(1) April 30 for the first quarter,

(2) July 31 for the second quarter,

(3) October 31 for the third quarter, and

(4) January 31 for the fourth quarter. If the due date falls on a Saturday, Sunday or State or federal holiday, the due date shall be extended to the next regular business day for the Bureau.

If the due date falls on a Saturday, Sunday, or State or federal holiday, the due date shall be extended to the next regular business day for the Bureau.

(c) The STRF Assessment Reporting Form shall contain the following information:

(1) Total number of students who signed enrollment agreements for educational programs during the reporting period; and

(2) Total number of students eligible for STRF who signed enrollment agreements for educational programs during the reporting period; and

(3) The total number of students who signed their enrollment agreement during the reporting period, were eligible for STRF, and who made their first payment during the reporting period; and

(4) The total number of students who signed their enrollment agreement in a previous reporting period, were eligible for STRF, and who made their first payment during the current reporting period; and

(5) Total amount of institutional charges after rounding each student's institutional charges to the nearest \$1,000, for all eligible STRF students whose STRF assessment was collected in the reporting period; and

(6) Current contact telephone number of the person preparing the form; and

(7) A declaration dated and signed under penalty of perjury by the person preparing the form that the form and any attachments are true and correct.

(d) In the event of a school closure, any collected assessments shall be remitted to the Bureau within seven days following the cessation of instruction.

(e) Submission of all prior reports and assessments required by this section is a condition of renewal."

The Institution has failed to submit a STRF Assessment Reporting Form for the following quarters:

- **Third and Fourth Quarters of 2019.**

On September 19, 2019, the Institution was mailed a notice at 1069 East Meadow Circle, Palo Alto, CA 94303, stating that the STRF Assessment Reporting Form for the 3rd quarter of 2019 was due. As of January 21, 2020, the Bureau has not received the STRF Assessment Reporting Form from the Institution.

On December 19, 2019, the Institution was mailed a notice at 1069 East Meadow Circle, Palo Alto, CA 94303, stating that the STRF Assessment Reporting Form for the 4th quarter of 2019 was due. As of January 21, 2020, the Bureau has not received the STRF Assessment Reporting Form from the Institution.

Order of Abatement:

	<p>The Bureau orders that the Institution submit the delinquent STRF Assessment Reporting Forms for the quarters listed above. The Institution shall also submit the student information to substantiate the data reported on the STRF Assessment Reporting Forms. The information provided shall comply with "Record Keeping Requirements" Pursuant to 5, CCR section 76140.</p> <p>Reason for modification: New substantive facts were presented at the informal conference. The Order of Abatement has been satisfied.</p> <p><u>Assessment of Fine</u> The fine for this violation is \$50.00 On February 24, 2020, the payment of fine was satisfied</p>
TOTAL MODIFIED ADMINISTRATIVE FINE DUE: <u>\$00.00</u>	

ORDER OF ABATEMENT

The Bureau orders that you comply with the orders described in the 'Violation Code Sections' of this document and submit evidence of compliance within 30 days from the date of this decision.

APPEAL OF CITATION

You *do not* have the right to request another Informal Conference to appeal this modified Citation. If you did not initially request an Administrative Hearing within 30 days from when the original citation was issued, you can no longer request one.

EFFECTIVE DATE OF CITATION

This modified Citation is effective on June 10, 2020. The Order of Abatement is due by **July 10, 2020**.

Failure to abate the violation within the time allowed is grounds for denial of an application for an approval to operate or discipline. The Bureau will promptly take all appropriate action to enforce the Modified Citation and recover the civil penalties prescribed therein or found to be due after a hearing.

CONTACT INFORMATION

If you have any questions regarding this decision or desire further information, please contact Gabriella Perez, Citation Analyst, at (916) 574-8969 or at Gabriella.Perez@dca.ca.gov.

"Original signature on file"

"6/10/2020"

Christina Villanueva
Discipline Manager

Date

Enclosures

- Declaration of Service by Certified and First-Class Mail