

Substantive Change Policy
Effective January 1, 2021
Updated 09.27.2021
Approved by: President McCay 9/27/2021

The Southern Association of College and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) substantive change policy and procedures assure the public that all aspects of an institution continue to meet standards. It helps ensure substantive changes, if approved, do not compromise the institution's ability to meet the Principles of Accreditation.

A substantive change is a significant modification or expansion of the nature and scope of an accredited institution. Substantive change includes high-impact, high-risk changes and changes that can impact the quality of educational programs and services. SACSCOC accredits an entire institution. Accreditation extends to all programs and services of an institution wherever located and however delivered.

SACSCOC does not accredit individual programs, locations, or portions of an institution. However, some new programs, locations, and other institutional changes are subject to notification and/or approval as defined in Substantive Change Policy and Procedures.

Acquiring another institution or any program or location of another institution.

Relocating an institution or an off-campus instructional site of an institution (including a branch campus).

Offering courses or programs at a higher or lower degree level than currently authorized.

Adding graduate programs at an institution previously offering only undergraduate programs (including degrees, diplomas, certificates, and other for-credit credential).

Changing the way an institution measures student progress, whether in clock hours or credit-hours; semesters, trimesters, or quarters; or time-based or non time-based methods or measures.

Adding a program that is a significant departure from the existing programs, or method of delivery, from those offered when the institution was last evaluated.

Initiating programs by distance education or correspondence courses.

Adding an additional method of delivery to a currently offered program.

Entering into a cooperative academic arrangement.

Entering into a written arrangement under 34 C.F.R. § 668.5 under which an institution or organization not certified to participate in the title IV Higher Education Act (HEA) programs offers less than 25% (notification) or 25-50% (approval) of one or more of the accredited institution's educational programs.

Substantially increase or decreasing the number of clock hours or credit hours awarded or competencies demonstrated, or an increase in the level of credential awarded, for successful completion of one or more programs.

Adding competency-based education programs.

Adding each competency-based education program by direct assessment.

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Awarding dual or joint academic awards.

Re-opening a previously closed program or off-campus instructional site.

Adding a new off-campus instructional site/additional location including a branch campus.

Adding a permanent location at a site at which an institution is conducting a teach-out program for students of another institution that has ceased operating before all students have completed their program of study.

Closing an institution, a program, a method of delivery, an off-campus instructional site, or a program at an off-campus instructional site.

Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC), *Substantive Change Policy and Procedures*;

<https://sacscoc.org/app/uploads/2019/08/SubstantiveChange.pdf>

Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC), *The Principles of Accreditation: Foundations for Quality Enhancement*, Section 14.2;

<https://sacscoc.org/app/uploads/2019/08/2018PrinciplesOfAccreditation.pdf>

Southern Association of College and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC), *Resource Manual for the Principles of Accreditation*;

<https://sacscoc.org/app/uploads/2019/08/2018-POA-Resource-Manual.pdf>

Vice Presidents (all levels), Deans (and Associates), and Directors are responsible for

1. becoming familiar with policies and procedures in the SACSCOC substantive change document,
2. notifying the university-appointed Accreditation Liaison as early as possible about proposals or initiatives that may be considered substantive changes,
3. providing the Accreditation Liaison with the supporting data and documentation necessary for reporting such changes to the SACSCOC,
4. adhering to any timeline set forth by SACSCOC for purposes of review and prior approval of substantive changes.

Responsibilities of the university-appointed Accreditation Liaison

The university-appointed Accreditation Liaison is responsible for

1. providing the substantive change policy to all Vice Presidents (all levels), Deans (and Associates), and Directors on an annual basis,
2. maintaining a current copy of the SACSCOC policy on the

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biannually), to be implemented after the date of the Board meeting, the submission deadlines are
U " meeting in June of the same calendar year, and
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For a substantive change requiring approval by the Executive Council of the Board of Trustees (which meets year-round) OR for a substantive change requiring notification only, the submission deadlines are

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K " June 30 of the subsequent calendar year.

If an implemented, but unreported, change should occur that is determined to be substantive to the university, the appropriate Vice President (any level), Dean (or Associate), or Director must notify the President or Provost and the university-appointed Accreditation Liaison immediately. The Accreditation Liaison must then notify SACSCOC according to the policy.

The current university-appointed Accreditation Liaison is Jessica L. Ickes, Associate Vice President for Institutional Research and Effectiveness, Phone 321-674-7569, email jickes@fit.edu.

h o #o# \ # If an institution is non-compliant with Substantive Change Policy and Procedures or Standard 14.2 (Substantive change), its accreditation may be in jeopardy. An unreported substantive change may require a review