

Administrative Regulation 1:5

~~Substantive Change Policy on Reporting Substantive Change to the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC)~~

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I. Introduction

The purpose of this regulation is to establish institutional [policies and](#) procedures for ~~recognizing and approving substantive change~~ [identifying institutional and programmatic changes that are substantive and](#) [for](#) ensuring compliance with ~~timely notification to the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) policy on substantive change through timely notification. The University's SACSCOC Accreditation Liaison is the individual responsible for ensuring that this policy is implemented. The internal approval process for each type of change varies, and follows all other Governing and Administrative Regulations, and the University Senate Rules.~~

~~The types of substantive change and the procedures for reporting them appropriately are found in the SACSCOC's policy on substantive change. If differences occur between this Administrative Regulation and the SACSCOC's policy, the SACSCOC's policy has precedence.~~

II. [Entities Affected](#)

[This regulation applies to all units of the University.](#)

III. Definitions

A. The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges

The SACSCOC, also called the Commission, is the recognized regional accrediting body in the 11 U.S. southern states and in Latin America for those institutions of higher education that award associate, baccalaureate, master's, or doctoral degrees. ~~The~~ SACSCOC is recognized by the U.S. Department of Education as an agency whose accreditation enables its member institutions to seek eligibility to participate in Title IV programs. To maintain its recognition by the U.S. Department of Education, the Commission has incorporated federal requirements into its substantive change policy and procedures. Some of those requirements expect an institution to seek and receive approval prior to the initiation of a substantive change so that the change can be included in the institution's scope of accreditation.

B. Substantive Change

Substantive change is a significant modification or expansion of the nature and scope of an accredited institution, as defined in SACSCOC's substantive change policy. The types of substantive change and the procedures for addressing them appropriately are found in the SACSCOC's policy on substantive change and on its substantive changes website.

<https://sacscoc.org/app/uploads/2019/08/SubstantiveChange.pdf>
<https://sacscoc.org/accrediting-standards/substantive-changes/>

Additional definitions related to substantive change are found in the SACSCOC's policy on substantive change:
<https://sacscoc.org/app/uploads/2019/08/SubstantiveChange.pdf>

~~C. Notification~~

~~Notification to the SASCOC regarding substantive change means the President of the University, or designee, shall send a letter to the President of the SACSCOC summarizing the proposed change, providing the intended implementation date, and listing the complete physical address if the change involves the initiation of an off-campus site or branch campus.~~

~~D. Prospectus~~

~~A prospectus is a concisely worded narrative that describes a proposed substantive change according to a format specified by the SACSCOC.~~

~~E. Accreditation Liaison~~

~~The accreditation liaison is the individual appointed by the President of the University to help ensure the University remains in compliance with SACS accreditation requirements and policies. The Senior Vice Provost for Academic Planning, Analytics and Technologies is the University's accreditation liaison.~~

~~F. Branch Campus~~

~~A branch campus is a location of an institution that is geographically apart and independent of the main campus of the institution. A location is independent of the main campus if the location is (1) permanent in nature, (2) offers courses in educational programs leading to a degree, certificate, or other recognized educational credential, (3) has its own faculty and administrative or supervisory organization, and (4) has its own budgetary and hiring authority.~~

~~G. Off-campus Site~~

~~An off-campus site is a location of an institution that is geographically apart, but not independent, of the main~~

~~campus. The site may be used in an ongoing manner to deliver programs or courses leading to a degree, certificate, or other recognized educational credential, but it does not have its own faculty, administrative organization or budget.~~

H. Distance Education

~~Distance education is a formal educational process in which the majority of the instruction (interaction between students and instructors and among students) in a course occurs when students and instructors are not in the same place. Instruction may be synchronous or asynchronous. A distance education course may use the internet; one-way and two-way transmissions through open broadcast, closed circuit, cable, microwave, broadband lines, fiber optics, satellite, or wireless communications devices; audio conferencing; or video cassettes, DVD's, and CD-ROMS if used as part of the distance learning course or program.~~

I. Degree Completion Program

~~A degree completion program is typically designed for a non-traditional undergraduate population such as working adults who have completed some college-level course work but have not achieved a baccalaureate degree. Students in such programs may transfer in credit from courses taken previously and may receive credit for experiential learning. Courses in degree completion programs are often offered in an accelerated format or meet during evening and weekend hours, or may be offered via distance learning technologies.~~

J. Teach-out Agreement

~~A teach-out agreement is a written agreement between institutions that provides for the equitable treatment of students and a reasonable opportunity for students to complete their program of study if an institution, or an institutional location that provides fifty percent or more of at least one program offered, ceases to operate before all enrolled students have completed their program of study. Such a teach-out agreement requires SACSCOC approval in advance of implementation.~~

K. Teach-out Plan

~~A teach-out plan is a written plan developed by an institution that provides for the equitable treatment of students if an institution, or an institutional location that provides fifty percent or more of at least one program, ceases to operate before all students have completed their program of study, and may include, if required by the institution's accrediting agency, a teach-out agreement between institutions. Teach-out plans must be approved by SACSCOC in advance of implementation.~~

L. Significant Departure

~~A significant departure is when a program is not closely related to previously approved programs at the institution or site or for the mode of delivery in question. To determine whether a new program is a "significant departure," it is helpful to consider the following questions:~~

- ~~1. What previously approved programs does the institution offer that are closely related to the new program and how are they related?~~
- ~~2. Will significant additional equipment or facilities be needed?~~
- ~~3. Will significant additional financial resources be needed?~~
- ~~4. Will a significant number of new courses be required?~~
- ~~5. Will a significant number of new faculty members be required?~~
- ~~6. Will significant additional library/learning resources be needed?~~

IV. Policy

The University of Kentucky must notify the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges of changes in accordance with its substantive change policy and, when required, seek approval prior to the initiation of changes.

V. Responsibilities

A. Chief Administrative Officers (CAOs)¹ are responsible for:

1. Being knowledgeable about what constitutes a substantive change as defined by SACSOC's substantive change policy;
2. Notifying the Accreditation Liaison of any potential substantive changes to ensure that the institution follows all appropriate timelines and procedures;
3. Monitoring the instruction that occurs at off-campus instructional sites and through cooperative academic arrangements to ensure compliance with SACSOC's Principles of Accreditation and substantive change policy; and
4. Coordinating the preparation of a prospectus or other documentation, as required.

B. The Accreditation Liaison is responsible for:

1. Being knowledgeable about what constitutes a substantive change as defined by SACSCOC's substantive change policy;
2. Monitoring any changes to SACSCOC's substantive change policy;
3. Ensuring the timely notification to SACSCOC of all **required** substantive changes;
4. Informing campus leaders about substantive change policy requirements;
5. Gathering information about campus activities related to substantive change from CAOs and the University Senate;
6. Serving on leadership councils, to facilitate the identification of potential substantive changes;
7. Making and documenting institutional decisions about whether an action is or is not a substantive change;
8. Maintaining an **record** of substantive change decisions; and
9. Supporting the preparation of any prospectus or other documentation that may be required.

C. The University Senate is responsible for developing and maintaining procedures and forms related to course and academic program approval, and to course/program changes, that ensure proposals have been reviewed for adherence to SACSCOC's substantive change policy.

VIII. Procedures

¹ Defined in Administrative Regulation 3:16 Review of Chief Administrative Officers

~~A. SACSCOC requires notification for substantive change. Some substantive changes require prior notification and approval; others require only prior notification. Notification requirements for the various types of substantive change are illustrated in the Matrix of University Procedures, Approval and Recommendation Responsibilities for Substantive Change. (see Appendix A)~~

~~Additional procedures for certain types of changes are found in the SACSCOC's Policy Statement on Mergers, Consolidations, Change of Ownership, Acquisitions, and Change of Governance, Control, Form, or Legal Status, which can be found at the SACSCOC website.~~

~~Approval authority relating to each type of substantive change occurs at various levels of the University and is illustrated in the Matrix of University Procedure, Approval and Recommendation Responsibilities for Substantive Change. (see Appendix A)~~

~~The President may delegate administrative responsibilities for approving or recommending on substantive change to the Provost or other appropriate senior administrators (GR III.A.1). These responsibilities shall be reflected in job descriptions of the positions, letters of appointment, and other appropriate documents for those assigned such responsibilities.~~

A. Procedures for Identifying Substantive Changes

~~Potential substantive changes are proactively identified during the academic program approval process and through the Biannual Substantive Change Notification process. When a potential substantive change is identified through the University Senate academic approval process or through notification from a Chief Administrative Officer, the Accreditation Liaison will~~

1. Academic Approval Process

In accordance with its academic approval responsibilities as established in GR IV, the University Senate ~~shall~~ must maintain academic program approval procedures and forms that:

- ~~a) Recognize substantive changes related to academic programs in appropriate approval documents. These documents shall will accompany the proposal at each step; and~~
- ~~b) Require approval by the appropriate educational unit faculties and also include any recommendations offered by the corresponding department chair, dean, and/or Provost prior to approval of academic substantive change by the Councils of the University Senate and the University Senate; and~~
- ~~e)b) Provide for timely notification to the Commission on Colleges prior to change implementation, as required by the SACSCOC substantive change policy.~~

2. Biannual Substantive Change Notification

The Accreditation Liaison ~~shall~~ must ~~inform~~ contact all ~~responsible individuals at each level of the University~~ Chief Administrative Officers (CAOs, as defined in AR 3:16), and the University Senate Council Chair, (see Matrix in Appendix A) of about the SACSCOC substantive change policy and the institutional substantive change policy on a biannual basis to:

- ~~a) Notify them about the policy and any changes related to the policy; and~~
- ~~b) and at the same time shall~~ Request notification of substantive changes ~~in planning~~ planned for the next 12-month period. The 12-month timeframe will provide a long-range outlook to ensure that notifications can be carried out six months prior to implementation of substantive change. ~~The Accreditation Liaison shall prepare the President's notification to the SACSCOC regarding the substantive changes that are reported.~~

B. Procedures for Determining Substantive Change

When a potential substantive change is identified through the University Senate academic approval process or through notification from a Chief Administrative Officer, the Accreditation Liaison ~~must~~ will:

1. Collect any additional information necessary to determine whether the planned change is considered substantive under the policy;
2. Make an ~~initial~~ determination as to whether the planned change requires no action, notification of SACSCOC or prior approval by SACSCOC;
3. Communicate the ~~initial~~ determination to the appropriate contact people for the change; and
4. Maintain institutional records of the determination process.

If the proposer of the change disagrees with the determination of the Accreditation Liaison, they ~~may~~ contact the Provost for resolution.

VII. Reporting Requirements

If the Accreditation Liaison determines that a prospectus is ~~subsequently~~ required by the SACSCOC Commission, the deans or appropriate senior administrators ~~shall~~ are responsible for coordinating the preparation of the prospectus and forwarding the prospectus to the Accreditation Liaison for final review and submission.

~~—The Accreditation Liaison shall review a required prospectus and obtain approval of the President and the Provost before preparing for submission to SACSCOC by the President, or designee.~~

References and Related Materials

34 CFR 602.22

GR Part III, The President of the University GR Part IV, The University Senate

Administrative Regulation 3:16

SACSCOC Policies

SACSCOC Substantive Change Policy Statement

Revision History

10/1/2009, 6/4/2012, 9/9/2013, (Updated Titles 11/17/2015), --/--/2021

For questions, contact: Office of Legal Counsel