

Reporting the Various Types of Substantive Change

The different types of substantive change, the specific procedure to be used for each, their respective approval/notification requirements, and their reporting time lines are included in the table that follows. Please read the full text under the appropriate procedure for details regarding reporting.

Types of Change	Procedure or Policy	Prior Notification Required	Prior Approval Required	Documentation and Time Frame for Contacting SACSCOC
Initiating coursework or programs at a different level than currently approved	Procedure 1	No	Yes	<u>Application for a Member Institution Seeking Accreditation at a Higher or Lower Degree Level</u> Due dates: March 15 (for June review) September 1 (for December review)
Initiating off-campus sites where student can obtain 50% or more credits toward a program (including but not limited to Early College High School, dual enrollment programs offered at a high school, and certificate programs that are not at employer's request and not on short notice)	Procedure 1	No	Yes	Cover Sheet <u>Prospectus</u> (See Appendix B of this document) Due dates: January 1 for 7/1-12/31 implementation July 1 for 1/1-6/30 implementation
Expanding at current degree level (<i>significant departure from current programs</i>).				
Expanding program offerings at previously approved off-campus sites by adding programs that ARE significantly different from current programs at the site AND at the institution				
Initiating degree completion programs				
Initiating a branch campus (See definition of "branch campus" on p. 3 of this document.)				
Initiating distance learning by offering 50% or more of the first program for the first time				
Relocating a main or branch campus				
Entering into a contract with an entity not certified to participate in USDOE Title IV programs if the entity provides 25% or more of an educational program offered by the SACSCOC accredited institution				

Types of Change	Procedure or Policy	Prior Notification Required	Prior Approval Required	Documentation and Time Frame for Contacting SACSCOC
Initiating dual or joint degrees involving program expansion (significant departure) or initiating a new site where student can obtain 50% or more credits toward a program	See SACSCOC policy Agreements Involving Joint and Dual Academic Awards	No	Yes	Cover Sheet Prospectus (See Appendix B of this document) Due dates: January 1 for 7/1-12/31 implementation July 1 for 1/1-6/30 implementation Copy of signed agreement, contact information for each institution, and additional details on non-SACSCOC institution(s) involved. See Policy
Initiating dual or joint degree with at least one institution <u>not</u> accredited by SACSCOC	See SACSCOC Policy Agreements Involving Joint and Dual Academic Awards	At least 6 months prior to implementation	Yes	Acceptance of notification, copy of signed agreement, contact information for each institution, and additional details on non-SACSCOC institution(s). See Policy.
Initiating a program or courses delivered through cooperative academic arrangement	Procedure 2	At least 6 months prior to implementation	No	Acceptance of notification, copy of signed agreement, contact information for each institution/entity
Initiating a direct assessment competency-based program	See SACSCOC Policy Direct Assessment Competency-Based Educational Programs	Yes – Screening Form	Yes	Submit “Screening Form” with letter of notification. If Prospectus is required, Due dates: March 15 (for June review) September 1 (for December review)
Initiating a merger/consolidation with another institution	See SACSCOC Policy: Merger/Consolidation, Acquisition, Change of Ownership, and Change of Governance, Control, Form, or Legal Status – Substantive Change for SACSCOC Accredited Institutions Policy Statement	Yes: December 15 (for June review); June 1 (for December review)	Yes	Cover Sheet Institutional Summary Form Prospectus (See Appendix in SACSCOC Policy: Merger/Consolidation, Acquisition, Change of Ownership, and Change of Governance, Control, Form, or Legal Status – Substantive Change for SACSCOC Accredited Institutions Policy Statement) Due dates: March 15 (for June review); September 1 (for December review)
Changing governance, ownership, control, or legal status of an institution				
Acquiring an institution or location (including programs) of another institution				
Adding a permanent location at a site where the institution is conducting a teach-out for students from another institution that is closing				

Types of Change	Procedure or Policy	Prior Notification Required	Prior Approval Required	Documentation and Time Frame for Contacting SACSCOC
Initiating a certificate program at a new off-campus site at employer's request and on short notice (previously approved program)	Procedure 1	No	Yes	Cover Sheet Modified prospectus Contact Commission Staff.
Initiating a certificate program that is a significant departure from previously approved programs at employer's request and on short notice				
Adding a site under a U.S. military contract for a previously approved program				
Altering significantly the length of a program				
Altering significantly the educational mission of the institution				
Changing from clock hours to credit hours	Procedure 1	No	Yes	Justify reasons for change, indicate calculation of equivalency, and other pertinent information
Moving an off-campus instructional site (serving the same geographic area)	Procedure 2	Yes	No	Letter of notification with old address, new address, and implementation date
Initiating dual or joint degrees with other SACSCOC accredited institution(s)	See SACSCOC Policy Agreements Involving Joint and Dual Academic Awards	At least 6 months prior to implementation	No	Acceptance of notification, copy of signed agreement and contact information for each institution. See Policy.
Initiating programs or courses offered through contractual agreement or consortium	Procedure 2	Yes	No	Letter of notification and copy of signed agreement
Entering into a contract with an entity not certified to participate in USDOE Title IV programs if the entity provides less than 25% of an educational program offered by the SACSCOC accredited institution				

Types of Change	Procedure or Policy	Prior Notification Required	Prior Approval Required	Documentation and Time Frame for Contacting SACSCOC
Initiating off-campus sites where student can obtain 25-49% of credits toward a program (including but not limited to Early College High School, dual enrollment programs offered at a high school, and certificate programs that are not at employer's request and not on short notice)	Procedure 2	Yes	No	Letter of notification Including street address and implementation date
Initiating distance learning by offering 25-49 of the first program for the first time				
Closing a program, approved off-campus site, branch campus, or institution where the institution plans to teach out its own students	Procedure 3	Yes	Yes	Description of teach-out plan included with letter of notification
Closing a program, approved off-campus site, branch campus, or institution where the institution plans contracts with another institution(s) to teach-out students (Teach-out Agreement)	Procedure 3	Yes	Yes	Description of teach-out plan, copy of signed teach-out agreement(s) detailing terms included with notification

Types of Change	Procedure or Policy	Prior Notification Required	Prior Approval Required	Documentation and Time Frame for Contacting SACSCOC
Initiating a certificate program at employer's request and on short notice using existing approved courses and location	NA	No	No	NA
Initiating certificate program (not at employer's request and not on short notice) using existing approved courses and location				
Initiating off-campus sites (including Early College High School and dual enrollment programs offered at the high school) where student can obtain 24% or less of credits toward a program				
Expanding program offerings at previously approved off-campus sites by adding approved programs that ARE NOT significantly different from current programs at the site				
Expanding program offerings at previously approved off-campus sites by adding approved programs that ARE significantly different from current programs at the site but NOT at the institution				
Initiating distance learning by offering 24% or less of any program for the first time				

Appendix B: The Substantive Change Prospectus

Use this information to determine the content and process for submitting a prospectus for a “Procedure One” substantive change requiring approval prior to implementation.

The Prospectus must be accompanied with a completed [Cover Sheet](#).

Do **not** use this information for

- mergers, consolidations, change of ownership, acquisitions, and change of governance, control, form, or legal status ([Merger/Consolidation, Acquisition, Change of Ownership, and Change of Governance, Control, Form, or Legal Status – Substantive Change for SACSCOC Accredited Institutions Policy Statement](#)),
 - direct assessment competency-based educational programs ([Direct Assessment Competency-Based Educational Programs](#)), or
 - Application for Member Institutions Seeking Accreditation at a Higher or Lower Degree Level ([Application for Member Institutions Seeking Accreditation at a Higher or Lower Degree Level](#)).
-

Before developing a prospectus, please review all of the information below concerning the content of the prospectus and how to submit the prospectus. When developing a prospectus, respond to all of the applicable requests for information.

Please remember that the prospectus should address the specific substantive change for which you are requesting approval. For example, if you are seeking approval for an off-campus site where adult, employed students will be enrolled in a graduate degree program, address specifically only the student support services that those students will need and describe how the support will be provided. Do not describe student support services that those students will not need such as athletic programs, dormitories, cafeterias, and other on-campus services that they cannot access.

How to Submit the Prospectus

- **Each submission must include the following in the order listed:**
 1. Transmittal letter signed by an institutional representative which briefly explains the submission
 2. “[Cover Sheet for Submission of Substantive Changes Requiring Approval](#)” form (available on the Substantive Change webpage at <http://sacscoc.org/accrediting-standards/substantive-changes/>).
 3. Name, telephone number, and email address of the person who may be contacted concerning questions about the prospectus.
 4. A list of degrees and majors which the institution is authorized to grant (photocopy from the catalog is acceptable)
 5. A list of existing **approved** off-campus sites and their addresses. **Note:** an approved site is one for which a prospectus has been submitted and which SACSCOC has approved to offer 50% or more of a program. A site where 25-49% of a program is offered is not considered to be an “approved” site; it is a site for which only notification has been accepted by SACSCOC.
 6. Prospectus (should be no longer than 25 pages plus appendices)
- **Submit only one** copy of the above materials to the President of SACSCOC at the address listed on the Cover Sheet.
- Submit the **Transmittal Letter and Cover Sheet** in hard copy (paper).
- Submit the body of the prospectus itself in hard copy (paper), flash drive, CD or DVD.

Documents will not be accepted via e-mail.

Special Note: SACSCOC will accept documentation submitted for approval to a system office or to a state coordinating or governing board, provided such documentation includes all the information required in a prospectus as listed below. **However**, the submission must include the completed [Cover Sheet](#) and Transmittal Letter and **must contain an index** correlating the documentation submitted to another entity with the corresponding information required in a prospectus.

Submissions lacking a clear, easily used index will not be accepted and will be returned to the institution without review. Faculty qualifications must be documented using the [Faculty Roster Form](#), utilizing the [Faculty Roster instructions](#). Curriculum vitae submitted in lieu of a faculty roster will not be accepted and will result in the submission being returned to the institution without review.

Please note that SACSCOC reserves the right to make amendments to the requirements outlined below for certain types of changes.

Required Components of the Prospectus

1. **ABSTRACT** (limit to one page or less)

- Describe the proposed change with its date of implementation.
- If a new program, identify where it will be offered.
- If a new off-campus site or branch, list its complete physical address.
- Provide projected number of students, if applicable.
- Indicate the projected life of the program or site, if applicable (single cohort or ongoing).
- Describe the primary target audience.
- Describe the instructional delivery methods to be used.
- Describe strengths of the institution to undertake this change.

2. **DETERMINATION OF NEED FOR THE CHANGE/RELATIONSHIP TO MISSION/PLANNING AND APPROVALS FOR THE CHANGE**

- Describe how the change is consistent with the mission and goals of the institution.
- Describe the rationale and need for the program to include how the institution determined need.
- Provide evidence of legal authority for the change if approval is required by the governing board or the state.
- Provide documentation that faculty and appropriate other groups were involved in planning for and approval(s) of the change.

3. **REQUIRED INFORMATION FOR THE SPECIFIC SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE (SELECT THE CHANGE RELEVANT TO THE PROSPECTUS AND PROVIDE ALL INFORMATION REQUIRED FOR THAT PARTICULAR CHANGE)**

For a **NEW PROGRAM** provide the following information:

- Provide the curriculum for the program and a projected schedule of course offerings.
- Provide specific programmatic goals (objectives) and specific student learning outcomes for the program.
- Describe how the student learning outcomes **for the program** will be assessed.
- Provide course descriptions for all courses in the proposed program.
- Describe admissions and graduation requirements for the program.
- Demonstrate compliance with Standard 10.7 (Policies for awarding credit) of the *Principles of Accreditation*.
- Describe administrative oversight to ensure the quality of the program.

- For a program offered in compressed time frames, describe the methodology for determining that levels of knowledge and competencies comparable to those required in traditional formats have been achieved.
- Follow instructions in item 4 below for providing information concerning number and qualifications of faculty scheduled to teach in the program.

For a NEW OFF-CAMPUS SITE OR BRANCH CAMPUS provide the following information:

- Identify whether the site is a branch campus or an instructional site. The definitions of “branch campus” and “instructional site” may be found on pages 5-6 of the *Principles of Accreditation*. See also Procedure One in the policy entitled [Substantive Change for SACSCOC Accredited Institutions](#). **Note: An institution is required to present itself and its sites to SACSCOC in the exact way it presents itself to the U.S. Department of Education.**
- Describe the educational program(s) to be offered at the site or branch. If a program to be offered at the site or branch is a new program requiring approval, also respond to the requirements for a new program listed above.
- Describe any differences in admission, curriculum, or graduation requirements for students enrolled at the new site or branch or any special arrangements for grading, transcripts, or transfer policies.
- Describe how programs at the new site or branch will be monitored and evaluated and how they will be incorporated into the institutional evaluation and assessment processes.
- Describe the administrative structure for overseeing the site or branch campus.
- Describe how services and operations at the new site or branch will be evaluated.
- Follow instructions in item 4 below for providing information concerning number and qualifications of faculty scheduled to teach at the site or branch campus.

For the OFFERING OF PROGRAM(S) VIA DISTANCE METHODOLOGY (ELECTRONIC OR CORRESPONDENCE) DELIVERY FOR THE FIRST TIME provide the following information:

- Describe the infrastructure to support distance delivery methods to include the learning management system and administrative structure for electronic delivery.
- Describe how faculty members will be trained in distance delivery methodology and how courses will be developed.
- Describe technical support for students enrolled in courses delivered by distance methods and technical support for faculty members.
- Describe how effectiveness of programs offered via distance delivery will be assessed.
- Document compliance with Standard 10.6 (Distance and correspondence education).
- Follow instructions in item 4 below for providing information concerning number and qualifications of faculty scheduled to teach courses provided by distance methodology.
- Describe processes in place to ensure that students have structured access to faculty members.

For the INITIATION OF DEGREE COMPLETION PROGRAMS provide the following information:

- Describe the degree completion program to include a description of how the degree completion program differs from the same program offered in traditional format.
- Describe how the institution ensures that student learning outcomes are the same for the program offered as a degree completion program as those for the program offered in traditional format.
- Describe assessment methods for determining achievement of student learning outcomes for the degree completion program.
- Describe admission requirements for students entering the degree completion program.
- Describe the format for offering the degree completion program (for example, compressed format, accelerated format, etc.).
- Follow instructions in item 4 below for providing information concerning number and qualifications of faculty members scheduled to teach in the degree completion program.

4. FACULTY QUALIFICATIONS

- Complete the [Faculty Roster Form](#) for faculty members scheduled to teach in the new program, in a degree completion program, at a new site or branch campus, or in programs to be offered by distance methodology for the first time. Follow directions for completing the form which requires that the institution present the qualifications of each faculty member to teach the courses assigned to them. The [form](#) and [instructions](#) may be accessed at www.sacscoc.org under [Institutional Resources](#) or from a link on the [Substantive Change](#) page.
- For a **new program**, the institution must demonstrate that it has at least one qualified faculty member to develop and/or teach discipline courses in the new program. Refer to Standard 6.2.a in the *Principles* concerning the determination of appropriate qualifications.
- Provide narrative with supporting evidence that the number of full-time faculty members will be adequate to support the initiative and describe the impact on faculty workload of the new program, new site, or distance delivery.
- Document scholarship and research capability of faculty members teaching in graduate programs and document faculty experience in directing student research.

5. LIBRARY AND LEARNING RESOURCES

- List and describe discipline-specific learning resources to support a new program. Please do not list all resources located in the library if they do not relate to the specific change.
- Document discipline-specific refereed journals and primary source materials.
- If the institution is reliant on agreements with other libraries, provide a signed copy of each formal agreement and describe how the collections support the program(s).
- Describe specifically how students enrolled in a new program and/or enrolled in a program at an off-campus location and/or enrolled in a distance education program access these discipline-specific learning resources.
- Describe how students and faculty members will access information electronically.
- Describe how faculty and students are instructed in the use of online resources as well as on site library resources.
- Describe resources to support students in access to and use of learning resources.

Note: If electronic databases are listed, describe the discipline-specific suites of resources and not just the name of the database or the consortium through which it is accessed (such as Viva, TexShare, Galileo, Louis, etc.).

6. STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

- Describe specific programs, services, and activities which will support students enrolled in the new program and/or enrolled at a new off-campus site and/or enrolled in distance education programs. Do not list student support services which are not relevant to the specific change.

7. PHYSICAL RESOURCES

- Describe the adequacy of physical facilities which will support the change.
- Describe equipment which will be available for a new program or available at a new site.
- Describe the impact that the proposed change will have on physical facilities and equipment for existing programs and services.

8. FINANCIAL SUPPORT

- Provide a business plan that includes all of the following (**NOTE: This applies to ALL submissions**)

- (a) a description of financial resources available to support the proposed change, **including a budget for the first year of the proposed change (a three-year budget is required for a new branch campus)**. Do not send a copy of the entire institutional budget.
 - (b) projected revenues and expenditures and cash flow for the proposed change
 - (c) the amount of resources going to institutions or organizations for contractual or support services for the proposed change
 - (d) the operational, management, and physical resources available for the change.
- Provide contingency plans in the event that required resources do not materialize.

The institution must disclose if it is currently on reimbursement for Title IV funding.

Institutions currently on sanction with SACSCOC for financial reasons must provide a copy of the audit for the most recently completed fiscal year.

9. DESCRIPTION OF INSTITUTIONAL EVALUATION AND ASSESSMENT PROCESSES FOR THE CHANGE

- Provide a brief description of institutional assessment processes.
- Describe how the institution will incorporate the change (program, site, distance education or other change) into the institution-wide review and assessment processes.

10. APPENDICES

- Appendices may be used in hard copy (print) submissions to provide documentation supporting the narrative in the prospectus.
- **NOTE: In hard copy submission tabs must be provided identifying each appendix (by name or number) referenced in the narrative.**
- Links may be provided in electronic submissions to link to documentation supporting the narrative in the prospectus. **Be sure links allow reviewers to return to the narrative.**

June 2009
Edited: February 2013
Edited: January 2015
Edited: November 2015
Edited: May 2016, July 2016
Edited for the Principles of Accreditation: May 2018
Revised: December 2018