

## **Columbus State University Substantive Change Policy**

The SACS liaison at Columbus State University is responsible for “notifying the Commission in advance of substantive changes and program developments in accord with the substantive change policies of the Commission. The liaison will also familiarize faculty, staff, and administrators with the standards and provide updates to appropriate individuals as policies and procedures are revised (SACSCOC, 2012). While the SACS liaison will retain the primary responsibility for facilitating the substantive change process, the appropriate campus administrators (e.g. the President, Provost/Vice President of Academic Affairs, Deans, Department Chairs, etc.) will have specific responsibilities as outlined in the CSU Substantive Change matrix on pages 2-6.

The Commission defines a substantive change as

“...a significant modification or expansion of the nature and scope of an accredited institution. Under federal regulations, substantive change includes

- Any change in the established mission or objectives of the institution
- Any change in legal status, form of control, or ownership of the institution
- The addition of courses or programs that represent a significant departure, either in content or method of delivery, from those that were offered when the institution was last evaluated
- The addition of courses or programs of study at a degree or credential level different from that which is included in the institution’s current accreditation or reaffirmation.
- A change from clock hours to credit hours
- A substantial increase in the number of clock or credit hours awarded for successful completion of a program
- The establishment of an additional location geographically apart from the main campus at which the institution offers at least 50% of an educational program.
- The establishment of a branch campus
- Closing a program, off-campus site, branch campus or institution
- Entering into a collaborative academic arrangement that includes only the initiation of a dual or joint academic program with another institution
- Acquiring another institution or a program or location of another institution
- Adding a permanent location at a site where the institution is conducting a teach-out program for a closed institution
- Entering into a contract by which an entity not eligible for Title IV funding offers 25% or more of one or more of the accredited institution’s programs”

### **Questions related to Substantive Change**

Questions related to substantive change should be directed to the Columbus State University Accreditation Liaison in the Office of the Provost and Academic Affairs at 706-507-8960.

### **Additional Information**

Official substantive change policies and procedures of the Commission can be reviewed at:

<http://www.sacscoc.org/SubstantiveChange.asp>.

**CSU Substantive Change Matrix**

Because a variety of individuals are involved in the substantive change process, the SACSCOC matrix below has been adapted to delineate individual responsibilities in the reporting and documentation of substantive changes (SACSCOC, 2014).

Type of Change	Notification Letter Required	Prior Approval Required	SACS Liaison informed of the change through the:	Documentation & Advance Submission Timeline	Documentation Responsibility:
Initiating coursework or programs at a different level than currently approved <i>Example: Initiating the Ed.D. in Curriculum and Leadership</i>	No	Yes	University Curriculum Committee	Application for Level Change 12 months in advance (by April 8 or September 15, as appropriate)	Dean and or Designee (Department Chair, Program Coordinator, Program Director)
Expanding at current degree level ( <i>significant departure from current programs</i> ) <i>Example: Development and implementation of the MS in Organizational Leadership</i>	Yes	Yes	University Curriculum Committee	Prospectus 6 months in advance	Dean and or Designee (Department Chair, Program Coordinator, Program Director)
Initiating a branch campus (defined as “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: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• permanent in nature;</li> <li>• offers courses in educational programs leading to a degree, certificate, or other recognized educational credential;</li> <li>• has its own faculty and administrative or supervisory organization; and</li> <li>• has its own budgetary and hiring authority.”)</li> </ul>	Yes	Yes	President	Prospectus 6 months in advance	SACS Liaison
<b>Initiating a certificate program at employer’s request and on short notice:</b>					
1. using existing approved courses	NA	NA	NA	None	NA
2. at a new off-campus site (previously approved program)	Yes	Yes	Department Chair, Program Coordinator, or Program Director	Modified prospectus Prior to implementation	Dean and/or Department Chair, Program Coordinator, or Program Director
3. that is a significant departure from previously approved programs	Yes	Yes	University Curriculum Committee	Modified prospectus Approval required prior to implementation	Dean and/or Department Chair, Program Coordinator, or Program Director

Type of Change	Notification Letter Required	Prior Approval Required	SACS Liaison informed of the change through the:	Documentation & Advance Submission Timeline	Documentation Responsibility
<b>Initiating other certificate programs</b>					
1. using existing approved courses	NA	NA	NA	None	NA
2. at a new off-campus site (previously approved program)	Yes	Yes	Department Chair, Program Coordinator, or Program Director	Prospectus Prior to implementation	Dean and/or Department Chair, Program Coordinator, or Program Director
3. that is a significant departure from previously approved programs	Yes	Yes	University Curriculum Committee	Prospectus 6 months prior to implementation	Dean and/or Department Chair, Program Coordinator, or Program Director
Altering significantly the educational mission of the institution	Yes	Yes	President	Prospectus 6 months in advance Contact Commission Staff	SACS Liaison
<b>Initiating joint or dual degrees with another institution:</b>					
1. Joint programs with another SACSCOC accredited institution	Yes	No	University Curriculum Committee	Copy of signed agreement and contact information for each institution Prior to implementation	Dean and/or Designee (Department Chair, Program Coordinator, Program Director)
2. Joint programs with an institution not accredited by SACSCOC	Yes	Yes	University Curriculum Committee	Prospectus 6 months in advance	Dean and/or Designee (Department Chair, Program Coordinator, Program Director)
3. Dual programs	Yes	No	University Curriculum Committee	Copy of signed agreement and contact information for each institution Prior to implementation	Dean and/or Designee (Department Chair, Program Coordinator, Program Director)
Repackaging of existing approved curriculum to create a new degree level <i>(Example: An institution with a 120-hour baccalaureate program creating an associate degree from its lower-division offerings.)</i>	Yes	Yes	University Curriculum Committee	Prior to implementation	Dean and/or Designee (Department Chair, Program Coordinator, Program Director)

Type of Change	Notification Letter Required	Prior Approval Required	SACS Liaison informed of the change through the:	Documentation & Advance Submission Timeline	Documentation Responsibility
<b>Initiating off-campus sites (including Early College High School programs offered at the high school)</b>					
1. Student can obtain 50 percent or more credits toward program <i>(Example: Providing more than 50% of the courses for the AS in General Studies at the Fort Benning site.)</i>	No	Yes	Department Chair, Program Coordinator, or Program Director	Prospectus 6 months in advance	Department Chair, Program Coordinator, or Program Director
2. Student can obtain 25-49 percent of credit	Yes	No	Department Chair, Program Coordinator, or Program Director	Letter of notification Prior to implementation	SACS Liaison
3. Student can obtain 24 percent or less	NA	NA	NA	None	NA
<b>Expanding program offerings at previously approved off-campus sites</b>					
1. Adding programs that are significantly different from current programs at the site	NA	NA	NA	None	NA
2. Adding programs that are NOT significantly different from current programs at the site	NA	NA	NA	None	NA
Altering significantly the length of a program	Yes	Yes	University Curriculum Committee	Prospectus 6 months in advance	Dean and/or Department Chair, Program Coordinator, or Program Director
Changing from clock hours to credit hours	Yes	Yes	University Curriculum Committee	Prospectus 6 months in advance	SACS Liaison
Adding a combination degree program that reduces hours needed to complete the combined degrees (e.g. combination baccalaureate and master's degrees)	Yes	Yes	University Curriculum Committee	Provide details on both programs of study and justify any deviation from Core Requirement 2.7.1 or its Interpretation Prior to implementation	Dean and/or Department Chair, Program Coordinator, or Program Director

Type of Change	Notification Letter Required	Prior Approval Required	SACS Liaison informed of the change through the:	Documentation & Advance Submission Timeline	Documentation Responsibility
<b>Initiating distance learning:</b>					
1. Offering 50 percent or more of a program <u>for the first time</u>	No	Yes	Department Chair, Program Coordinator, or Program Director	Prospectus 6 months in advance	Department Chair, Program Coordinator, or Program Director
2. Offering 25-49 percent of a program <u>for the first time</u>	Yes	No	Department Chair, Program Coordinator, or Program Director	Letter of notification Prior to implementation	SACS Liaison
3. Offering 24 percent or less of a program	NA	NA	NA	None	NA
Initiating programs/courses offered through contractual agreement or consortium	Yes	No	Dean and University Curriculum Committee	Letter of notification and copy of signed agreement Prior to implementation	Dean and SACS Liaison
<b>Entering into a contract with an entity not certified to participate in USDOE Title IV programs:</b>					
1. if the entity provides 25% or more of an educational program offered by the COC accredited institution	Yes	Yes	President or Provost	Prospectus 6 months in advance	SACS Liaison
2. if the entity provides less than 25% of an educational program offered by the accredited institution	Yes	No	President or Provost	Copy of the signed agreement 6 months in advance	SACS Liaison
Initiating a merger/consolidation with another institution	Yes	Yes	President	Prospectus 6 months in advance (by April 8 or September 15, as appropriate)	SACS Liaison
Changing governance, ownership, control, or legal status of an institution	Yes	Yes	President	Prospectus 6 months in advance	SACS Liaison

Type of Change	Notification Letter Required	Prior Approval Required	SACS Liaison informed of the change through the:	Documentation & Advance Submission Timeline	Documentation Responsibility
Relocating a main or branch campus	Yes	Yes	President	Prospectus 6 months in advance	SACS Liaison
Moving an off-campus instructional site (serving the same geographic area)	Yes	No	President	Letter of notification with new address and intended start date; Prior to implementation	SACS Liaison
Initiating degree completion programs	Yes	Yes	University Curriculum Committee	Prospectus 6 months in advance	Department Chair and/or Dean
<b>Closing a program, approved off-campus site, branch campus, or institution:</b>					
1. Institution to teach out its own students	Yes	Yes	University Curriculum Committee	Description of teach-out plan included with letter of notification Immediately following decision to close	Department Chair, Program Coordinator, or Program Director
2. Institution contracts with another institution to teach-out students (Teach-out Agreement)	Yes	Yes	University Curriculum Committee	Description of teach-out plan, copy of signed teach-out agreement detailing terms included with notification Immediately following decision to close	Department Chair, Program Coordinator, or Program Director
Acquiring any program or site from another institution	Yes	Yes	President or Provost	Prospectus 6 months in advance	SACS Liaison and Dean or designee
Adding a permanent location at a site where the institution is conducting a teach-out for students from another institution that is closing	Yes	Yes	President or Provost	Prospectus 6 months in advance	SACS Liaison and Dean or designee

## References

Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, Commission on Colleges. (2014). *Substantive Change for Accredited Institutions of the Commission on Colleges*. Retrieved on January 11, 2015 from

<http://www.sacscoc.org/pdf/081705/SubstantiveChange.pdf>.

Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, Commission on Colleges. (2012). *The Accreditation Liaison*. Retrieved on January 11, 2015 from <http://www.sacscoc.org/pdf/081705/accreditation%20liaison.pdf>.