

Columbus State University Substantive Change Policy

The SACSCOC 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,” and “familiarizing faculty, staff, and students with the Commission’s accrediting policies and procedures, and with particular sections of the accrediting standards and Commission policies that have application to certain aspects of the campus (e.g., library, continuing education) especially when such documents are adopted or revised (SACSCOC, 2018).” While the accreditation liaison will retain the primary responsibility for facilitating the substantive change process, the appropriate campus administrators (e.g. the President, Provost/Executive Vice President, Deans, Department Chairs, etc.) will have specific responsibilities as outlined in the CSU Substantive Change matrix on pages 2-8.

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”

Due Dates

Documentation must be submitted to Dr. Tina Butcher, in the Office of the Provost, with adequate time for review, finalization, printing, and shipping. There are no exceptions to SACSCOC deadlines. Unless otherwise stated in the matrix below, completed documentation must be **received** by SACSCOC by the following dates.

- **January 1** for changes desired for implementation from July 1 – December 31.
- **July 1** for changes desired for implementation from January 1 – June 30.

Financial Costs

There are no costs to submit letters of notification. However, there is a fee of \$500 for each prospectus or application for level change submitted. If a change involves multiples SACSCOC institutions, the fee is \$500 per institution. If the change involves a non-SACSCOC institution, the fee is \$7,500 and the SACSCOC accredited institution(s) are responsible for ensuring payment.

Some changes may require a team visit as part of the review process. Should the substantive change require a SACSCOC committee visit, the cost will include the actual cost of the committee (i.e. travel, lodging, food, Incidental Fee for each reviewer, and related expenses), **and** a \$2,000 administrative fee.

Failure to Comply with Reporting Requirements

If an institution fails to follow SACSCOC substantive change policy and procedures, it may lose its Title IV funding or be required by the U.S. Department of Education to reimburse it for money received by the institution for programs related to the unreported substantive change. In addition, the institution’s case may be referred to SACSCOC Board of Trustees for the imposition of a sanction or for removal from membership.

Questions related to Substantive Change

If you are implementing a change and are unsure whether it would be considered a substantive change, please contact the Columbus State University Accreditation Liaison, Dr. Tina Butcher, in the Office of the Provost at 706-507-8265. If formal action is needed with the Commission, she will assist in identifying the type of documentation, and if required, the Prospectus format, to be completed.

Additional Information

A full copy of the official substantive change policies and procedures of the Commission can be reviewed at: <http://sacscoc.org/SubstantiveChange.asp>.

CSU Substantive Change Process

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, documentation, and preparation of materials required for substantive changes (SACSCOC, 2018).

Type of Change	Notification Letter Required Prior to Implementation?	Prior Approval Required?	Responsible Party(ies) for Notifying the SACSCOC Liaison	Due Dates* and Required Documentation	Documentation Preparation Responsibility
Academic Programs					
Expanding at current degree level (<i>significant departure from current programs</i>) <i>Example: Development and implementation of the MS in Organizational Leadership</i>	No	Yes	University Curriculum Committee	Cover Sheet Prospectus	Dean and or Designee (Department Chair, Program Coordinator, Program Director)
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 DUE: March 15 (June review) DUE: September 1 (December review)	Dean and or Designee (Department Chair, Program Coordinator, Program Director)
Initiating dual or joint degrees with other SACSCOC accredited institution(s) (See “Agreements Involving Joint and Dual Academic Awards”)	Yes, at least six months prior to implementation	No	Provost and Dean	Acceptance of notification, copy of signed agreement and contact information for each institution.	Dean and or Designee (Department Chair, Program Coordinator, Program Director)
Initiating dual or joint degree with at least one institution <u>not</u> accredited by SACSCOC (See “Agreements Involving Joint and Dual Academic Awards”)	Yes, at least six months prior to implementation	Yes	Provost and Dean	Acceptance of notification, copy of signed agreement, contact information for each institution, and additional details on non-SACSCOC institution(s)	Dean and or Designee (Department Chair, Program Coordinator, Program Director)
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 “Agreements Involving Joint and Dual Academic Awards”)	No	Yes	Provost and Dean and/or University Curriculum Committee	Cover Sheet , Prospectus, Copy of signed agreement, contact information for each institution, and additional details on non-SACSCOC institution(s) involved	Dean and or Designee (Department Chair, Program Coordinator, Program Director)

Type of Change	Notification Letter Required Prior to Implementation?	Prior Approval Required?	Responsible Party(ies) for Notifying the SACSCOC Liaison	Due Dates* and Required Documentation	Documentation Preparation Responsibility
Initiating a direct assessment competency-based program (See " Direct Assessment Competency-Based Educational Programs ")	Yes, with Screening Form	Yes	University Curriculum Committee	If Prospectus is required, DUE: March 15 (for June review) DUE: September 1 (for December review)	Dean and or Designee (Department Chair, Program Coordinator, Program Director)
Initiating degree completion programs	No	Yes	University Curriculum Committee	Cover Sheet Prospectus	Dean and or Designee (Department Chair, Program Coordinator, Program Director)
Altering significantly the length of a program	No	Yes	University Curriculum Committee	Cover Sheet , Modified prospectus, (SACSCOC Liaison must contact Commission Staff regarding the prospectus)	Dean and or Designee (Department Chair, Program Coordinator, Program Director)
Changing from clock hours to credit hours	No	Yes	University Curriculum Committee	Justify reasons for change, indicate calculation of equivalency, and other pertinent information	Dean and or Designee (Department Chair, Program Coordinator, Program Director)
Initiating a certificate program at a new off-campus site at employer's request and on short notice (previously approved program)	No	Yes	Provost and Dean	Cover Sheet , Modified prospectus, (SACSCOC Liaison must contact Commission Staff regarding the prospectus)	Dean and or Designee (Department Chair, Program Coordinator, Program Director)
Initiating a certificate program that is a significant departure from previously approved programs at employer's request and on short notice	No	Yes	University Curriculum Committee	Cover Sheet , Modified prospectus, (SACSCOC Liaison must contact Commission Staff regarding the prospectus)	Dean and or Designee (Department Chair, Program Coordinator, Program Director)
Initiating a certificate program at employer's request and on short notice using existing approved courses and location	No	No	NA	NA	NA
Initiating certificate program (not at employer's request and not on short notice) using existing approved courses and location	No	No	NA	NA	NA

Type of Change	Notification Letter Required Prior to Implementation?	Prior Approval Required?	Responsible Party(ies) for Notifying the SACSCOC Liaison	Due Dates* and Required Documentation	Documentation Preparation Responsibility
Off-Campus Instructional Sites					
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) <i>(Example: Providing more than 50% of the courses for the AS in General Studies at the Fort Benning site.)</i>	No	Yes	Dean, Department Chair, Program Coordinator/Director	Cover Sheet Prospectus	Dean and or Designee (Department Chair, Program Coordinator, Program Director)
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)	Yes	No	Dean, Department Chair, Program Coordinator/Director	Letter of notification including street address and implementation date <u>prior to implementation</u>	SACSCOC Liaison
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	No	No	NA	NA	NA
Expanding program offerings at previously approved off-campus sites by adding programs that ARE significantly different from the current programs at the site AND at the institution.	No	Yes	Dean, Department Chair, Program Coordinator/Director	Cover Sheet Prospectus	Dean and or Designee (Department Chair, Program Coordinator, Program Director)
Expanding program offerings at previously approved off-campus sites by adding approved programs that ARE NOT significantly different from current programs at the site	No	No	NA	NA	NA
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	No	No	NA	NA	NA
Adding a site under a U.S. military contract for a previously approved program	No	Yes	Provost	Cover Sheet , Modified prospectus, (SACSCOC Liaison must contact Commission Staff regarding the prospectus)	SACSCOC Liaison

Type of Change	Notification Letter Required Prior to Implementation?	Prior Approval Required?	Responsible Party(ies) for Notifying the SACSCOC Liaison	Due Dates* and Required Documentation	Documentation Preparation Responsibility
Initiating a branch campus. 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"> • permanent in nature; • offers courses in educational programs leading to a degree, certificate, or other recognized educational credential; • has its own faculty and administrative or supervisory organization; and • has its own budgetary and hiring authority.” 	No	Yes	President or Provost	Cover Sheet Prospectus	SACSCOC Liaison
Relocating a main or branch campus	No	Yes	President or Provost	Cover Sheet Prospectus	SACSCOC Liaison
Moving an off-campus instructional site (serving the same geographic area)	Yes	No	Provost and Dean	Letter of notification with old address, new address, and implementation date <u>prior to implementation</u>	SACSCOC Liaison
Distance Learning					
Initiating distance learning by offering 50% or more of the first program for the first time	No	Yes	University Curriculum Committee	Cover Sheet Prospectus	Dean and or Designee (Department Chair, Program Coordinator, Program Director)
Initiating distance learning by offering 25-49 of the first program for the first time	Yes	No	University Curriculum Committee	Letter of notification including street address and implementation date <u>prior to implementation</u>	Dean and or Designee (Department Chair, Program Coordinator, Program Director)
Initiating distance learning by offering 24% or less of any program for the first time	No	No	NA	NA	NA
Contracts and Consortium Programs					
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	No	Yes	Provost and Dean	Cover Sheet Prospectus	Dean and or Designee (Department Chair, Program Coordinator, Program Director)

Type of Change	Notification Letter Required Prior to Implementation?	Prior Approval Required?	Responsible Party(ies) for Notifying the SACSCOC Liaison	Due Dates* and Required Documentation	Documentation Preparation Responsibility
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	Yes	No	Provost and Dean	Letter of notification with copy of signed agreement <u>prior to implementation</u>	Dean and or Designee (Department Chair, Program Coordinator, Program Director)
Initiating programs or courses offered through contractual agreement or consortium	Yes	No	Provost and Dean	Letter of notification with copy of signed agreement <u>prior to implementation</u>	Dean and or Designee (Department Chair, Program Coordinator, Program Director)
Institutional Changes					
Altering significantly the educational mission of the institution	No	Yes	President	Cover Sheet , Modified prospectus, (SACSCOC Liaison must contact Commission Staff regarding the prospectus)	SACSCOC Liaison
Initiating a merger/consolidation with another institution (See “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 (June review) June 1 (December review)	Yes	President	Cover sheet , Institutional Summary Form, and Prospectus DUE: March 15 (June review) DUE: September 1 (December review)	SACSCOC Liaison
Changing governance, ownership, control, or legal status of an institution (See “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 (June review) June 1 (December review)	Yes	President	Cover sheet , Institutional Summary Form, and Prospectus DUE: March 15 (June review) DUE: September 1 (December review)	SACSCOC Liaison
Acquiring an institution or location (including programs) of another institution (See “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 (June review) June 1 (December review)	Yes	President	Cover sheet , Institutional Summary Form, and Prospectus DUE: March 15 (June review) DUE: September 1 (December review)	SACSCOC Liaison

Type of Change	Notification Letter Required Prior to Implementation?	Prior Approval Required?	Responsible Party(ies) for Notifying the SACSCOC Liaison	Due Dates* and Required Documentation	Documentation Preparation Responsibility
Adding a permanent location at a site where the institution is conducting a teach-out for students from another institution that is closing (See " 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 (June review) June 1 (December review)	Yes	President	Cover sheet , Institutional Summary Form, and Prospectus DUE: March 15 (June review) DUE: September 1 (December review)	SACSCOC Liaison
Closures					
Closing a program, approved off-campus site, branch campus, or institution where the institution plans to teach out its own students	Yes	Yes	Provost and/or University Curriculum Committee	Letter of notification including description of teach-out plan <u>prior to implementation</u>	SACSCOC Liaison
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)	Yes	Yes	Provost and/or University Curriculum Committee	Letter of notification including description of teach-out plan, copy of signed teach-out agreement(s) detailing <u>terms prior to implementation</u>	SACSCOC Liaison

*Unless **highlighted** in the matrix, due dates are listed on page 1 of this document.

References

Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, Commission on Colleges. (2018). *Substantive Change for Accredited Institutions of the Commission on Colleges*. Retrieved on August 31, 2018 from <http://sacscoc.org/pdf/081705/SubstantiveChange.pdf>.

Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, Commission on Colleges. (2012). *The Accreditation Liaison*. Retrieved on August 31, 2018 from <http://www.sacscoc.org/pdf/081705/accreditation%20liaison.pdf>.