

RELATIONS WITH EDUCATIONAL ACCREDITATION AGENCIES

GK  
(REGULATION)

PURPOSE

The purpose of this regulation is to outline the procedures to be followed to monitor, collect, and share information regarding any College District substantive change to ensure timely reporting of any such change to the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC).

SACSCOC LIAISON

The College President will appoint an administrator or faculty member to be the College District's liaison to the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Schools (SACSCOC). The liaison's responsibilities are listed on the SACSCOC website:

[www.sacscoc.org/pdf/081705/accreditation%20liaison.pdf](http://www.sacscoc.org/pdf/081705/accreditation%20liaison.pdf)

The SACSCOC liaison will be responsible for notifying SACSCOC within the prescribed timelines of all substantive changes as defined in the most current publication of the Substantive Change Policy and Procedures located on the SACSCOC website:

<https://sacscoc.org/accrediting-standards/substantive-changes/#subchangeopol>

APPLICABILITY

Responsible administrators, faculty members, chairs, department heads, and deans must report substantive changes to the college's SACSCOC accreditation liaison. Failure to report in a timely manner and according to SACSCOC policy will result in the delay of an offering.

Specific requirements and timelines for SACSCOC reporting and implementation are included in the SACSCOC policy document specific to each substantive change, *Substantive Change Policy and Procedures* (Exhibit A).

IMPLEMENTATION

- A. The academic or administrative officer or department initiating the substantive change will:
  1. Consult with the Director of Academic Planning and Innovation (API) to determine if potential program changes could result in a substantive change request. A determination of substantive change shall, at all times, be guided by the most current version of the SACSCOC *Substantive Change Policy and Procedures* document.
  2. Seek approval from the Accreditation Liaison to move proposed curricular changes to the Curriculum Committee.

3. Route curricular changes to the Curriculum Committee for review and include submission of the completed Substantive Change Check-list indicating whether the change is/is not a substantive change.
4. Ensure the necessary documentation for any substantive change is included with the request and that approvals are collected from the appropriate department chair or director and Dean.
5. Coordinate with the Director of API and the Accreditation Liaison to submit appropriate substantive change documents to SACSCOC if required (see Timelines).

B. The Director of API will:

1. Respond to a requestor regarding a potential substantive change request, providing a determination on whether or not a substantive change request is warranted.
2. Facilitate the development of the substantive change request following the SACSCOC *Substantive Change Policy and Procedures* (Exhibit A).
3. Review the substantive change request for completeness, appropriateness, and consistency with SACSCOC policies and procedures.
4. Prepare the formal transmission to SACSCOC.
5. Facilitate the submission of subsequent documentations requested by SACSCOC.
6. Disseminate information related to SACSCOC substantive change approvals.

C. The Accreditation Liaison will:

1. Notify President as appropriate of the intent to enter into a substantive change.
2. Review the change and consult with the appropriate members of the campus community such as the effected academic department/college, appropriate curriculum committee, Chief Financial Officer, Financial Aid office, etc.
3. Submit notifications, prospectuses, and other required documents to SACSCOC.
4. Notify the President of the substantive change submissions to SACSCOC.
5. Maintain a file of all substantive change submissions.

TIMELINES

Per the SACSCOC Policy, "For a substantive change requiring approval by the full Board of Trustees (which meets biannually), to be implemented after the date of the Board meeting, the submission deadlines are:

- March 15 for review at the Board's biannual meeting in June of the same calendar year, and
- September 1 for review at the Board's biannual meeting in December of the same calendar year.

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:

- January 1 for changes to be implemented July 1 through December 31 of the same calendar year, and
- July 1 for changes to be implemented January 1 through June 30 of the subsequent calendar year."

For a substantive change requiring notification only, it can be submitted any time before implementation. Once the institution has submitted notification, it may implement before receiving a response from SACSCOC. If there are deficiencies or additional information needed about the notification, the institutional liaison will be contacted at the time of review for resolution and before action is taken. This applies to notifications only, not to approvals: changes requiring approval cannot be implemented until approved by the SACSCOC Board of Trustees.

For a substantive change to close a program, site, program at a site, or method of delivery, a teach-out plan should be submitted as soon as possible after the decision is made to close (i.e., stop admitting students).

#### LATE NOTIFICATION

If an implemented, but unreported, change should occur that is determined to be substantive to the college, the Accreditation Liaison must be notified immediately. The Accreditation Liaison must then notify SACSCOC according to the policy.

#### RISK OF NON-COMPLIANCE

Per SACSCOC, "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 of the institution's substantive change policy and procedures document by the SACSCOC Board of Trustees. Non-compliance subjects the institution to monitoring, sanction, or removal from membership. Failure to secure approval, if required, of a substantive change involving programs or locations that qualify for title IV federal funding may place the institution in jeopardy with the U.S. Department of Education, including reimbursement of funds received related to an unreported substantive change."

#### RESPONSIBILITIES

Each college department is responsible for informing the college appointed SACSCOC Accreditation Liaison of any potential substantive changes in a manner that ensures the College can meet the required notification, review and approval processes of SACSCOC. For academic program activities, a SACSCOC substantive change report may be required.

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 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.

The Accreditation Liaison (the Vice President for Instruction) is responsible for the timely reporting of a substantive change to SACSCOC in accordance with the requirements of SACSCOC and college policy. The Accreditation Liaison reports to the college President. The Accreditation Liaison is responsible for:

1. keeping the college informed of any changes in the substantive change policy,
2. maintaining a current copy of the SACSCOC policy on the College's online policy manual,
3. working with the Vice Presidents (all levels), Deans (and Associates), and Directors to determine whether a proposal is a substantive change and to generate the necessary letters, prospectus, and other documents for reporting to SACSCOC,
4. submitting the requested substantive change documents to SACSCOC, and
5. coordinating any necessary follow-up action.

REGULATION  
AMENDMENTS

This regulation shall be amended as necessary to align with SACSCOC guidelines.