



Office of
Analytics & Planning
JACKSONVILLE UNIVERSITY

Jacksonville University Substantive Change Policy

PURPOSE

As a regionally accredited institution of higher education, the University is responsible for compliance with the substantive change requirements of the U.S. Department of Education as outlined in [34 C.F.R. §602.22](#). Regional accrediting bodies, such as SACSCOC, are tasked with ensuring institutional compliance with these federal requirements. The SACSCOC policy statement, "[Substantive Change for SACSCOC Accredited Institutions](#)," outlines institutional responsibilities related to the reporting of substantive change.

"Substantive Change" is defined by SACSCOC as a "significant modification or expansion of the nature and scope of an accredited institution." Under federal regulations, substantive change includes but is not limited to:

- 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 percent 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 such as a dual degree program or a joint degree 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.

Implementation of a change that clearly is or may be substantive cannot occur until the University notifies SACSCOC of its intention and receives approval if required. Failure to report these and other planned substantive changes can result in loss of accreditation of the University's degree programs.

DEFINITIONS

The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges

The SACSCOC 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.

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.

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.

Prospectus

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

Accreditation Liaison

The accreditation liaison is the individual appointed by the President of the University to help ensure the University remains in compliance with SACSCOC accreditation requirements and policies. The Executive Director of Institutional Analytics, Effectiveness, and Strategic Planning is the University's accreditation liaison.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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 of 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.

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.

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?

PROCESS

All proposed changes to academic programs related to the offering of new programs, new modalities of instruction, the addition of new sites, the development of joint degree programs or other consortial/contractual relationships, and other changes as listed in the SACSCOC table below, must be reported to the Office of Analytics & Planning at the outset of planning. All proposed curriculum changes must include a Substantive Change Checklist. The SACSCOC Liaison will determine the need for a substantive change filing and the appropriate SACSCOC procedure to follow.

There are three procedures for addressing the different types of substantive changes. All are detailed in the SACSCOC substantive change policy:

- Procedure One (1) for the Review of Substantive Changes Requiring Approval Prior to Implementation
- Procedure Two (2) for the Review of Substantive Changes Requiring Only Notification Prior to Implementation
- Procedure Three (3) for Closing a Program, Site, Branch Campus or Institution

At the beginning of each fall and spring semester, the University's SACSCOC Liaison will conduct a training workshop for relevant campus stakeholders. Each year the SACSCOC Liaison will update workshop materials to include any changes to the policy that may have occurred during the year. The SACSCOC Liaison is also responsible for notifying the President's Council, Registrar, and members of the Curriculum Committee by email of changes as they occur throughout the year. Lastly, it is the responsibility of the SACSCOC Liaison to update the institutional change policy and procedures as required and maintain all information on the University's Substantive Change Policy website.

Table of SACSCOC Substantive Change Reporting Responsibilities

| 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 | Application for Level Change 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 Prospectus as detailed in Appendix B of Substantive Change for SACSCOC Accredited Institutions 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 | | | | |
| 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 as detailed in Appendix B of Substantive Change for SACSCOC Accredited Institutions 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 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 Changing governance, ownership, control, or legal status of an institution Acquiring any program or site from 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 | See SACSCOC Policy: “Mergers, Consolidations, Change of Ownership, Acquisitions, and Change of Governance, Control, Form, or Legal Status” | Yes: December 15 (for June review); June 1 (for December review) | Yes | Cover Sheet Institutional Summary Form Prospectus (See Appendix in SACSCOC Policy: “Mergers, Consolidations, Change of Ownership, Acquisitions, and Change of Governance, Control, Form, or Legal Status”) Due dates: March 15 (for June review) September 1 (for December review) |

| 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 |