

Sul Ross State University
Alpine, Texas
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Substantive Change Policy and Procedures

PURPOSE

The purpose of the Sul Ross State University's Substantive Change Policy and Procedures is to outline the requirements, procedures and processes for coordinating timely and complete notification of substantive changes to the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, Commissions on Colleges (SACSCOC).

POLICY STATEMENT

The University is required to demonstrate continuing compliance with the [*Principles of Accreditation: Foundations for Quality Enhancement*](#) by adhering to all standards, requirements, policies and procedures associated with the definition and scope of a substantive change as stated in [*SACSCOC Policy for Substantive Changes for Accredited Institutions*](#).

Any potential change that could be deemed substantive must be submitted in writing via the applicable reporting line to the appropriate Provost/Vice President/Executive Director or the President as documented in the SCOPE and PROCEDURES sections below. The Provost, Vice Presidents or President will bring forward each potential substantive change to be discussed by the Executive Cabinet. The Provost will subsequently notify the SACSCOC Accreditation Liaison as to the nature, scope, and proposed date of the potential change. SACSCOC defines a substantive change as "a significant modification or expansion of the nature and scope of an accredited institution." For additional information, please review the SACSCOC [*Substantive Change - Frequently Asked Questions*](#).

In order to ensure timely notification to SACSCOC, members of the Executive Cabinet will keep the Provost apprised of the status of the potential change. The Provost and the SACSCOC Accreditation Liaison will oversee the process of preparing appropriate notification, in conjunction with those involved with the change, according to the requirements in [*SACSCOC Policy Substantive Changes for Accredited Institutions*](#) and other related policy and accreditation documents maintained by SACSCOC.

All responsible University officers and faculty (as identified in the SCOPE section) will be notified of this policy and reminded each fall and spring semester regarding their responsibility for compliance. The President, Provost and Vice Presidents are responsible

for bringing forward any potential substantive changes from their areas under this policy. The Provost and SACS Accreditation Liaison will ensure that information regarding this policy, associated resources available from SACSCOC, and answers to frequently asked questions are made available on the "[Institutional Research and Effectiveness](#)" web page.

Compliance with the university's Substantive Change Policy and Procedures is mandatory.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all University officers who can initiate, review, approve, and allocate resources to any changes, including those to academic and non-academic programs and activities that may be considered a substantive change according to [SACSCOC Policy for Substantive Changes for Accredited Institutions](#). Within academic areas, such changes can originate with individual or groups of faculty members, department committees, Department Chairs, Deans and Associate Deans, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, Academic Committee, or any other area reporting to the Provost.

In non-academic areas, potential substantive changes may arise in individual units, among supervisors in each area, executive management teams within Vice Presidential or Director areas, or with the Vice Presidents/ Directors themselves. Further, the need for a potential substantive change may come to the attention of the President or those in his direct reporting line.

Each individual hereby designated is required to be familiar and comply with this policy.

PROCEDURES

Any proposed change that could be deemed substantive according to SACSCOC policy must be submitted in writing to the Provost, appropriate Vice President, or President, as outlined in the **POLICY STATEMENT** section. These notifications must include: (a) title of the proposed change; (b) a brief description of the change including its scope; (c) responsible individual to act as contact; (d) tentative timeline for approval; and (e) earliest date possible for implementation. These preliminary notifications will be reviewed by the Executive Council.

The definition of Substantive Change and the applicable institutional notifications are codified in [SACSCOC Policy for Substantive Changes for Accredited Institutions](#). Table 1 below lists the different types of substantive change, the specific procedure to be used for each, their respective approval/notification requirements, and their reporting time lines.

REVIEW

1. The SRSU Substantive Change Policy and Procedure document will be reviewed regularly by the Executive Cabinet, to ensure that it complies with the [SACSCOC Policy for Substantive Changes for Accredited Institutions](#).
2. Following review of the "Substantive Change Policy and Procedures" document by the Executive Cabinet, members of the Executive Cabinet will inform all responsible University officers and faculty (as identified in **SCOPE**) in their respective areas of

any changes in the policy or procedures regarding substantive change. These University officers and faculty will inform all staff and faculty in their respective areas of these changes.

3. Revisions to the SRSU Substantive Change Policy and Procedures document will be included in the most recent revisions of the Faculty Handbook and the Administrative Policy Manual and posted on the "[University Policies](#)" web page within one week after approval by the Executive Cabinet.

Table 1
Types of Substantive Changes and SACSCOC Reporting Requirements
With SRSU Reporting Responsibilities

Types of Change	Procedure	Prior Notification Required	Prior Approval Required	Time Frame for Contacting COC	SACS Liaison Informed of change by:	Documentation	Responsible for Documentation
Initiating coursework or programs at a different level than currently approved	1	NA	Yes	NA	Provost/Dean	Application for Level Change Due dates: April 15 or September 15	Dean or designee (Chair, Coordinator, Director)
Expanding at current degree level (significant departure from current programs)	1	Yes	Yes	6 months	Provost/Dean	Prospectus	Dean or designee (Chair, Coordinator, Director)
Initiating a branch campus (See definition of "branch campus")	1	Yes	Yes	6 months	President	Prospectus	SACS Liaison and President/Provost
Initiating a certificate program at employer's request and on short notice							
...using existing approved courses	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
...at a new off-campus site (previously approved program)	1	NA	Yes	NA	Provost/Dean	Modified prospectus	Department Chair, Coordinator, Director
...that is a significant departure from previously approved programs	1	Yes	Yes	Approval required prior to implementation	Provost/Dean	Modified prospectus	Department Chair, Coordinator, Director

Types of Change	Procedure	Prior Notification Required	Prior Approval Required	Time Frame for Contacting COC	SACS Liaison Informed of change by:	Documentation	Responsible for Documentation
Initiating other certificate programs							
... using existing approved courses	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
... at a new off-campus site (previously approved program)	1	NA	Yes	NA	Provost/Dean	Prospectus	Department Chair, Coordinator, Director
...that is a significant departure from previously approved programs	1	Yes	Yes	6 months	Provost/Dean	Prospectus	Department Chair, Coordinator, Director
Altering significantly the educational mission of the institution	1	NA	Yes	NA	President	Contact Commission Staff (also see page 16, Item 9)	SACS Liaison and President
Initiating joint or dual degrees with another institution: (See: Collaborative Academic Arrangements: Policy and Procedures.)							
Joint programs with ...another SACSCOC accredited institution	2	Yes	NA	Prior to implementation	Provost/Dean	Copy of signed agreement and contact information for each institution	Dean or designee (Chair, Coordinator, Director)
....with an institution not accredited by SACSCOC	1	Yes	Yes	6 months	Provost/Dean	Prospectus	Dean or designee (Chair, Coordinator, Director)
Dual programs	2	Yes	No	Prior to implementation	Provost/Dean	Copy of signed agreement and contact information for each institution	Dean or designee (Chair, Coordinator, Director)

Types of Change	Procedure	Prior Notification Required	Prior Approval Required	Time Frame for Contacting COC	SACS Liaison Informed of change by:	Documentation	Responsible for Documentation
Initiating off-campus sites (including Early College High School programs offered at the high school)							
...Student can obtain 50 percent or more credits toward program	1	NA	Yes	NA	Provost/Dean	Prospectus	Department Chair, Coordinator, Director
...Student can obtain 25-49 percent of credit	2	Yes	NA	Prior to Implementation	Provost/Dean	Letter of Notification	SACS Liaison
...Student can obtain 24 percent or less	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Expanding program offerings at previously approved off-campus sites							
...Adding programs that are significantly different from current programs at the site	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
...Adding programs that are NOT significantly different from current programs at the site	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Altering significantly the length of a program	1	NA	Yes	NA	Provost/Dean	Prospectus	Dean or designee (Chair, Coordinator, Director)

Types of Change	Procedure	Prior Notification Required	Prior Approval Required	Time Frame for Contacting COC	SACS Liaison Informed of change by:	Documentation	Responsible for Documentation
Initiating distance learning							
....Offering 50 percent or more of a program <u>for the first time</u>	1	NA	Yes	NA	Provost/Dean	Prospectus	Department Chair, Coordinator, Director
....Offering 25-49 percent	2	Yes	No	Prior to Implementation	Provost/Dean	Letter of Notification	SACS Liaison
....Offering 24 percent or Less	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Initiating programs or courses offered through contractual agreement or consortium	2	Yes	NA	Prior to Implementation	Dean	Letter of Notification and copy of signed agreement	Dean and SACS Liaison
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 COC accredited institution	1	NA	Yes	NA	President or Provost	Prospectus	SACS Liaison
.... if the entity provides less than 25% of an educational program offered by the accredited institution	2	Yes	NA	6 months	President or Provost	Copy of the signed agreement	President or Provost
Initiating a merger/consolidation with another institution	See SACSCOC policy Mergers, Consolidations and Change of Ownership...	Yes	Yes	6 months	President	Prospectus Due dates: April 15 or September 15	SACS Liaison

Types of Change	Procedure	Prior Notification Required	Prior Approval Required	Time Frame for Contacting COC	SACS Liaison Informed of change by:	Documentation	Responsible for Documentation
Changing governance, ownership, control, or legal status of an Institution	See SACSCOC policy Mergers, Consolidations and Change of Ownership...	Yes	Yes	6 months	President	Prospectus Due dates: April 15 or September 15	SACS Liaison
Relocating a main or branch campus	1	Yes	Yes	6 months	President	Prospectus	SACS Liaison
Moving an off-campus instructional site (serving the same geographic area)	2	Yes	NA	Prior to Implementation	President	Letter of notification with new address and starting date	SACS Liaison
Changing from clock hours to credit hours	1	NA	Yes	NA	Provost	Justify reasons for change, indicate calculation of equivalency, and other pertinent information	Provost and SACS Liaison
Altering significantly the length of a program	1	NA	Yes	NA	Provost	Prospectus	Provost and SACS Liaison
Initiating degree completion programs	1	NA	Yes	NA	Provost/Dean	Prospectus	Department Chair, Coordinator, Director

Types of Change	Procedure	Prior Notification Required	Prior Approval Required	Time Frame for Contacting COC	SACS Liaison Informed of change by:	Documentation	Responsible for Documentation
Closing a program, approved off-campus site, branch campus, or Institution							
....Institution to teach out its own students	3	Yes	Yes	Immediately following decision to close	Provost/Dean	Description of teach-out plan included with letter of notification	Provost, Dean or designee (Chair, Coordinator, Director)
....Institution contracts with another institution to teach-out students (Teach-out Agreement)	3	Yes	Yes	Immediately following decision to close	Provost/Dean	Description of teach-out plan, copy of signed teach-out agreement detailing terms included with notification	Provost, Dean or designee (Chair, Coordinator, Director)
Acquiring any program or site from another institution	See SACSCOC policy Mergers, Consolidations and Change of Ownership...	Yes	Yes	6 months	President or Provost	Prospectus	SACS Liaison and President/Provost
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 and Change of Ownership...	Yes	Yes	6 months	President or Provost	Prospectus	SACS Liaison and President/Provost