

Southside Virginia Community College Substantive Change Policy and Procedures

Purpose: The purpose of this policy is to adhere to the Substantive Change policy and procedures established by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC). It is expected of us as an institution to follow the proper procedures for reporting substantive changes to SACSCOC.

Definition of Substantive Change: Southside Virginia Community College (SVCC) is accredited by SACSCOC. SACSCOC accreditation enables the College to be eligible for federal financial aid.

As a SACSCOC accredited institution, SVCC is responsible for following the substantive change policy by informing the Commission of changes in accord with the Commission's procedures and, when required, seeking approval prior to the initiation of the change. 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 the SACSCOC Board of Trustees for the imposition of a sanction or for removal from membership (SACSCOC Resource Manual, May 2012).

Substantive change is 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 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

-From SACSCOC Policy Statement on Substantive Change (Edited: August, 2011 and Last Approved: 8/6/12)

SVCC Policy: To ensure adherence with SACSCOC procedures for reporting Substantive Change, the SACSCOC Accreditation Liaison will be consulted prior to beginning any process that may result in a substantive change. The College President or the College's SACSCOC Accreditation Liaison will report any substantive change to the Commission in accordance with the SACSCOC Substantive Change policy.

Procedure: For any academic program or division considering a change to a program length, structure, delivery mode, the Campus Provost or Dean should first review the Substantive Change Checklist located on the Institutional Effectiveness homepage to determine if the proposed modifications may constitute a substantive change. If the change may in any way be considered substantive, the Campus Provost or Dean should then contact the SACSCOC accreditation liaison as soon as the change is considered. It is encouraged that the SACSCOC Accreditation Liaison is consulted for any potential change to an academic program's structure, length, site, or delivery mode.

For institutional and administrative changes (i.e., modification to institutional mission), the administrator proposing the change should consult with the SACSCOC Accreditation Liaison to determine the nature of the change and the necessary notification to the Commission.

In some instances, SACSCOC needs upwards of 12 months notification prior to the implementation of a substantive change. Therefore, SVCC members are encouraged to notify the SACSCOC Accreditation Liaison as soon as a program, institutional, or administrative change is considered and to consult the SACSCOC Substantive Change Policy to identify the potential timeline needed to notify SACSCOC.

Late Notification of Substantive Change: If a substantive change has occurred prior to notifying SACSCOC, Campus Provost, Dean, or appropriate administrator should contact the SACSCOC Accreditation Liaison immediately so that SACSCOC can be notified of the change.

**Southside Virginia Community College
Substantive Change Checklist**

This list contains many of the most common substantive changes, but it is not comprehensive. It is advised that all potential program or institutional changes be discussed with the SACSCOC Accreditation Liaison prior to implementation.

Academic Program Change

When initially considering a potential change, determine if the proposed change is:	Yes	No
Offering courses at a new off-campus site (e.g., high schools, prisons, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Initiating or reinstating an award-granting program	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Expanding program offerings at a previously approved off-campus site	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Discontinuing an academic program, approved off-campus site, or branch campus	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Initiating distance learning for a program(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Altering the number of credits required to complete a program	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Initiating joint or dual degrees with another institution	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Initiating programs/courses offered through contractual agreement or consortium	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Entering into a contract with an entity not certified to participate in USDOE Title IV programs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Moving an off-campus instructional site	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Initiating coursework or programs at a more advanced level than currently approved (e.g., B.A.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Acquiring a program or site from another institution	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Institutional/ Administrative Change

When initially considering a potential change, determine if the proposed change is:	Yes	No
Altering the educational mission of the institution	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Initiating coursework or programs at a more advanced level than currently approved (e.g., B.A.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Changing governance, ownership, control, or legal status	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Initiating a merger/consolidation with another institution	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Initiating a branch campus	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Changing from credit hours to clock hours	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Adding a permanent location at a site where the institution is conducting a teach-out for students from another institution that is closing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

For questions pertaining to any of these statements, contact Dr. Anne Hayes, Director of Institutional Effectiveness and SACSCOC Accreditation Liaison, at (434) 736-2024. Also, consider consulting the SACSCOC SubstantiveChange Policy Statement.

SACSCOC Substantive Change Notification Timelines

The following timelines are intended to provide the appropriate faculty member or administrator with examples of the most common types of substantive changes and the timeframe needed to notify SACSCOC and/or gain approval of the change from the Commission. These examples are not comprehensive, and therefore, it is strongly encouraged that SVCC's Accreditation Liaison be notified of any proposed changes that may be considered substantive notification as early as possible.

No SACSCOC notification necessary

(Contact Accreditation Liaison to ensure that no notification is needed):

1. Initiating an off-campus site where students can obtain 24% or less of credits/clock hours of certificate*/degree (includes career studies certificates)
2. Offering courses via distance education** that amount to 24% or less of the credits/clock hours needed to complete a degree, certificate* or diploma
3. Expanding program offerings at a previously approved off-campus site in which the additional programs are NOT significantly different from current programs in College curriculum~
4. Initiating a certificate program using existing approved courses

Written SACSCOC notification prior to implementation of change

(Contact Accreditation Liaison *at least two months* prior to implementation)

1. Initiating an off-campus site where students can obtain 25-49% of credits/clock hours of certificate*/degree (includes career studies certificates)
2. Offering from 25% to 49% of the credits/clock hours required for a program via distance education**
3. Expanding program offerings at a previously SACS-approved off-campus site in which the additional programs are significantly different from current programs at the College
4. Initiating programs/courses offered through contractual agreement or consortium
5. Relocating an approved off-campus site

Written SACSCOC notification and approval prior to implementation of change

(Contact Accreditation Liaison *at least seven months* prior to implementation of change):

1. Inactivating (closing) a program with internal teach-out protocol^
2. Inactivating (closing) a program with teach-out agreement with another institution^

Written SACSCOC notification *and* approval of an abbreviated prospectus prior to implementation of change

(Contact Accreditation Liaison *at least eight months* prior to implementation):

1. Initiating a previously approved certificate program at a new off-campus site
2. Initiating a certificate program that is a significant departure from previously approved programs in the College curriculum~

Written SACSCOC notification at least 6 months in advance *and* approval of a *full* prospectus

(Contact Accreditation Liaison *at least nine months* prior to implementation):

1. Adding significantly different programs to the academic curriculum at the College~
2. Offering a majority (50% or more) of the credit hours/clock hours needed to complete a degree, certificate or diploma via distance education* (there are exceptions to this guideline)
3. Offering a majority (50% or more) of the credit hours/clock hours needed to complete a degree, certificate or diploma at off-campus site (new or previously approved site))
4. Altering significantly the length of a program (rule of thumb is increasing or decreasing the number of credit hours/clock hours by 25% or more)
5. Initiating a degree completion program

6. Initiating a new branch campus
7. Relocating a branch or main campus
8. Altering significantly the educational mission of the institution

Footnotes:

*Includes Career Studies Certificates

**Distance Education is defined by COC as 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 employ correspondence study, or audio, video, or computer technologies.

^ 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.

~Consult with Accreditation Liaison to determine if changes are "significant."