



## **Substantive Change**

### **Purpose**

As a member of Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC), Stephen F. Austin State University (SFA) is responsible for notifying and, when necessary, seeking approval for substantive changes from the Commission in accordance with the SACSCOC substantive change policy.

### **Persons Affected**

This policy applies to all university faculty, staff, and students.

### **Definitions**

Substantive change: a significant modification or expansion of the nature and scope of an accredited institution.

### **Policy**

SFA is committed to upholding all of the principles and policies of the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) and SACSCOC. The university is also committed to establishing and maintaining procedures to facilitate an effective and timely notification process regarding substantive changes.

### **Procedures**

The university is required to notify THECB and SACSCOC of substantive changes and request approval, when required, prior to the initiation of the changes. The SFA SACSCOC liaison, appointed by the Office of the Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs, is responsible for coordinating efforts to identify the need for and creation of notifications or approvals related to substantive change. The Office of the Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs is responsible for all communication with the appropriate governing body.

Under federal regulations, substantive change includes but is not limited to:

- Substantially changing the established mission or objectives of an institution or its programs.
- Changing the legal status, form of control, or ownership of an institution.
- Changing the governance of an institution.
- Merging / consolidating two or more institutions or entities.
- Acquiring another institution or any program or location of another institution.
- Relocating an institution or an off-campus instructional site of an institution (including a branch campus).
- Offering courses or programs at a higher or lower degree level than currently authorized.



- Changing the way an institution measures student progress, whether in clock hours or credit-hours; semesters, trimesters, or quarters; or time-based or non-time-based methods or measures.
- Adding a program that is a significant departure from the existing programs, or method of delivery, from those offered when the institution was last evaluated by SACSCOC.
- Initiating programs by distance education or correspondence courses.
- Adding an additional method of delivery to a currently offered program.
- Entering into a cooperative academic arrangement.
- Entering into a written arrangement under 34 C.F.R. § 668.5 under which an institution or organization not certified to participate in the title IV Higher Education Act (HEA) programs offers less than 25% (notification) or 25-50% (approval) of one or more of the accredited institution's educational programs. An agreement offering more than 50% of one or more of an institution's programs is prohibited by federal regulation.
- Substantially increasing or decreasing the number of clock hours or credit hours awarded or competencies demonstrated, or increasing the level of credential awarded, for successful completion of one or more programs.
- Adding competency-based education programs.
- Adding each competency-based education program by direct assessment.
- Adding programs with completion pathways that recognize and accommodate a student's prior or existing knowledge or competency.
- Awarding dual or joint academic awards.
- Re-opening a previously closed program or off-campus instructional site.
- Adding a new off-campus instructional site/additional location including a branch campus.
- Adding a permanent location at a site at which an institution is conducting a teach-out program for students of another institution that has ceased operating before all students have completed their program of study.
- Closing an institution, a program, a method of delivery, an off-campus instructional site, or a program at an off-campus instructional site.

An institution is required to notify or secure SACSCOC approval prior to implementing a substantive change. An institution is responsible for maintaining compliance at all times with Standard 14.2 (Substantive change) of the Principles of Accreditation and with the Substantive Change Policy and Procedures and related policies.

When planning to make changes that may require substantive change notification or approval, proposal sponsors must consult with the SFA SACSCOC liaison to determine the appropriate procedure for the proposed change.

The SFA curriculum review cycle is the process used to identify substantive changes related to the addition, deletion, or modification of courses and degree programs. In addition, all proposals for distance education, off-campus sites, and certificate program requests will follow the curriculum review process. All proposals must follow and document adherence to curriculum review and approval policies and processes described in SFA HOP 02-208 Curriculum Reviews, Modification and Approvals. When applicable, the SFA SACSCOC liaison will provide the information necessary to prepare a prospectus in accordance with the requirements outlined in the SACSCOC Substantive Change Policy and THECB substantive change guidelines. The SACSCOC prospectus and/or THECB proposal must accompany the Curriculum Change



## Request.

At least once each academic year, the SACSCOC liaison will provide information to the academic deans, division vice presidents, and academic unit heads regarding substantive change policies and procedures. During this session, the deans, division vice presidents, and academic unit heads will identify potential substantive changes.

All substantive change education and review activities must be coordinated to allow ample time to satisfy the time frame for notification and/or approval as set by THECB and/or SACSCOC. SFA will adhere to the reporting times as specified in THECB guidelines and in the Substantive Change for SACSCOC Accredited Institutions policy statement.

## **Related Statutes or Regulations, Rules, Policies, or Standards**

34 CFR § 668.5

Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges Substantive Change Policy

Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board Guidelines

SFA HOP 02-208 Curriculum Reviews, Modification and Approvals

## **Responsible Executive**

Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs

## **Forms**

None

## **Revision History**

September 1, 2023 (original)