

ELIZABETH CITY STATE UNIVERSITY
Substantive Change Notification Policy (SACSCOC)

Preamble

As defined by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC), substantive change is a significant modification or expansion of the nature and scope of an accredited institution. The Commission is required to review all substantive changes that occur, determine if the changes affect the quality of the institution and assure the general public that the institution continues to meet all standards. As an accrediting agency recognized by the U.S. Department of Education, SACSCOC is required to enforce federal policies, such as substantive change.

Elizabeth City State University (ECSU) is responsible for following all SACSCOC substantive change procedures and informing the commission, as necessary, of any changes prior to implementation. Failure to follow the substantive change policy and procedures could result in the loss of Title IV funding or require reimbursement to the U.S. Department of Education for money received by the institution for programs related to the unreported substantive change. In addition, the institution may be referred to the Commission for the imposition of a sanction or be removed from membership. ECSU is required to have a policy and procedure to ensure that all substantive changes are reported to the Commission in a timely manner.

I. Definitions

A. Distance Education

SACSCOC defines distance education as a method of delivery in which 50% or more of instruction occurs when students and instructors are not in the same location. It includes synchronous (live or real-time) and asynchronous (not live or real-time).

B. Institutional Accreditation Liaison

The individual appointed by the Chancellor of the University to help ensure the University remains in compliance with SACSCOC accreditation requirements and policies.

C. Off-Campus Instructional Site

A location geographically apart from an institution's sole main campus and where instruction is delivered.

D. Significant Change in Program Length

Program credit hours increase or decrease by 25% or more, and students' expected time to completion increases or decreases by more than one term or its equivalent or

comparable measure.

E. Significant Departure in Program

One in which the proposed new program has no closely related counterpart among the previously approved programs in the curriculum. To determine whether a new program is a significant departure, the university will consider whether the new program requires:

1. New faculty;
2. 50-100% new content;
3. New library or other learning resources; and
4. New equipment or facilities.

F. 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 twenty-five 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.

II. Substantive Change

According to the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC), Substantive Change includes, but is not limited to:

A. Substantive Change that Requires Approval Prior to Implementation

1. Substantial changes to the institution's mission or objectives, or to the goals of its programs.
2. Changes to the legal status, control structure, or ownership of the institution.
3. Changes in the governance structure of the institution.
4. Merging or consolidating two or more institutions or entities.
5. Offering programs at a different degree level (either higher or lower) than currently authorized.
6. Modifying how student progress is measured, whether in terms of clock hours or credit hours, semesters, trimesters, quarters, or by time-based versus non-time-based methods.
7. 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.
8. Closing an institution, a program, a method of delivery, an off-campus instructional site, or a program at an off-campus site.
9. Entering into a written agreement under 34 C.F.R. § 668.5, allowing an institution or organization not certified to participate in Title IV HEA programs to offer

between 25% and 50% of an accredited institution's educational program.

Agreements offering more than 50% of an institution's programs are prohibited by federal regulation.

10. Significant increases or decreases in the number of clock hours or credit hours awarded, in the competencies required, or in the level of credential awarded for successful completion of a program.
11. Participating in the federal Prison Education Program providing Pell Grant access to confined or incarcerated students.

B. Substantive Change that Only Requires Notification Prior to Implementation

1. Adding an additional delivery method to a currently offered program.
2. Entering a cooperative academic arrangement with another SACSCOC institution or organization.
3. Re-opening a previously closed program or off-campus instructional site within 5 years.

III. Notification

Elizabeth City State University will notify the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) of changes in accordance with the substantive change policy and, when required, seek approval prior to the initiation of changes.

IV. Procedure

- A. To ensure compliance, academic deans or chairs are responsible for completing University Curriculum Committee Forms for curriculum changes and proposals (e.g., new degree programs, initiation of off-campus location, etc.). The accreditation liaison is a required signature on the UCC Signature Page. The liaison will make a determination as to whether the proposal constitutes a substantive change.
- B. If the change is determined as substantive, the liaison shall submit the appropriate documentation to SACSCOC in a timely manner and in accordance with the SACSCOC Substantive Change Policy statement. ECSU's Substantive Change Policy shall be published on ECSU's website. The liaison shall document and maintain a record of all substantive change activity.
- C. ECSU's SACSCOC liaison shall serve on the Academic Administrative and Planning Council to ensure awareness of other potential substantive changes (e.g., contractual or consortia relationships, joint and dual academic agreements, changes to mission, etc.).