

## H. Council Trenholm State Community College

Policy Name:	SACSCOC – Substantive Change Notification Policy
Effective:	June 28, 2022
Revised:	February 1, 2021; April 18, 2022
Approved by Policy Committee:	June 6, 2022
Approved by President’s Cabinet:	June 28, 2022

In order to remain in compliance with Standard 14.2 of the *Principle of Accreditation*, TSCC must submit a notification of substantive change to the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) prior to implementation of the change. This policy establishes the College’s responsibility for identifying substantive changes, and it includes the procedure for approving the changes and notifying SACSCOC in a timely manner.

### **TSCC Policy Statement on Substantive Change Notification**

All substantive changes will be reported to the SACSCOC on a timely basis consistent with the Commission's policy and procedures on substantive changes.

### **Definition of Substantive Change**

This definition and list of changes are taken directly from the SACSCOC *Substantive Change Policy and Procedure*.

A substantive change is a significant modification or expansion of the nature and scope of an accredited institution. Substantive change includes high-impact, high-risk changes and changes that can impact the quality of educational programs and services.

- 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.
- Adding graduate programs at an institution previously offering only undergraduate programs (including degrees, diplomas, certificates, and other for-credit credential).
- 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.
- 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 increase or decreasing the number of clock hours or credit hours awarded or competencies demonstrated, or an increase in 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.

Other substantive change requirements, including those required by federal regulations, include:

- 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, viz.,
  - [Agreements Involving Joint and Dual Academic Awards](#) [PDF];
  - [Credit Hours](#) [PDF];
  - [Direct Assessment Competency-based Educational Programs](#) [PDF];
  - [Distance and Correspondence Education](#) [PDF];
  - [Dual Enrollment](#) [PDF];
  - [Merger/Consolidation, Acquisition, Change of Ownership, and Change of Governance, Control, Form, or Legal Status](#) [PDF]; and
  - [Seeking Accreditation at a Higher or Lower Degree Level](#) [PDF].

The Commission on College's substantive change policy may be accessed at the following link:

<https://sacscoc.org/app/uploads/2019/08/SubstantiveChange.pdf>

### **Non-Compliance**

If an institution is non-compliant with Substantive Change Policy and Procedures or Standard 14.2 (Substantive change), its accreditation may be in jeopardy. An unreported substantive change may require a review of the institution's substantive change policy and procedures document by the

SACSCOC Board of Trustees. Non-compliance subjects the institution to monitoring, sanction, or removal from membership. Failure to secure approval, if required, of a substantive change involving programs or locations that qualify for title IV federal funding may place the institution in jeopardy with the U.S. Department of Education, including reimbursement of funds received related to an unreported substantive change. For additional information, refer to Appendix A, Standards and Policy Addressing Unreported Substantive Change, in *Substantive Change Policy and Procedures*.

### **Substantive Change Notification Responsibilities**

Trenholm State Community College's accreditation liaison is responsible for coordinating the College's substantive change notification actions. The College's liaison will present an overview of the SACSCOC's substantive change policy to the President's Cabinet at the beginning of each academic year and inform the Cabinet of important updates as necessary.

In addition, the SACSCOC liaison will consult with the President of the College and the President's Cabinet concerning strategic initiatives that may be classified as substantive changes according to SACSCOC policy. It is the responsibility of the members of the President's Cabinet to inform the College's liaison of any initiatives that could potentially be classified as substantive changes and to present the initiatives to the Cabinet at least eight months prior to implementation. Some initiatives may require earlier notice.

### **Procedures for Reporting Substantive Changes**

In consultation with the College's SACSCOC liaison and the President's Cabinet, initiatives presented to the Cabinet will be reviewed based on SACSCOC substantive change policy.

1. The employee responsible for the proposed change completes and submits the Substantive Change Approval form to the Executive Vice President/Vice President of Instructional Services, who will review, approve, and submit the form to the Accreditation Liaison.
2. The College's SACSCOC liaison will prepare a timeline for each approved initiative that has been identified as a substantive change, including when the College will submit the initiative to its governing board, if applicable; when SACSCOC must be notified; and when any supporting documentation must be submitted to both agencies.
3. The College's SACSCOC liaison, using a Substantive Change Team, will determine what type of action is required for each substantive change based on the SACSCOC substantive change policy, which may be found at: <https://sacscoc.org/app/uploads/2019/08/SubstantiveChange.pdf>
4. The President of the College will notify the Commission on Colleges of a substantive change in the form of a letter to the President of the Commission on Colleges summarizing the proposed change and providing all necessary details outlined in the SACSCOC *Substantive Change Policy and Procedures*.
5. The SACSCOC liaison will submit the substantive change prospectus, if necessary, according to SACSCOC guidelines.

### **General Requirements**

General requirements universally apply to most or all types of substantive change. They address obligations and processes by an institution and by SACSCOC. Specific requirements are addressed by

substantive change type, organized by institutional changes, off-campus instructional site / additional location changes, and program changes.

**Submission deadlines:** Substantive change prospectus, application, and notification submission deadlines depend on (1) the type of SACSCOC Board of Trustees review, if required, and (2) the planned implementation date of the substantive change.

For a substantive change requiring approval by the full Board of Trustees (which meets biannually), to be implemented after the date of the Board meeting, the submission deadlines are

- **March 15** for review at the Board's biannual meeting in June of the same calendar year, and
- **September 1** for review at the Board's biannual meeting in December of the same calendar year.

For a substantive change requiring approval by the Executive Council of the Board of Trustees (which meets year-round) or for a substantive change requiring notification only, the submission deadlines are

- **January 1** for changes to be implemented July 1 through December 31 of the same calendar year, and
- **July 1** for changes to be implemented January 1 through June 30 of the subsequent calendar year.