

## **SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE REVIEW, APPROVAL, AND REPORTING PROCESS**



Texas A&M University-Texarkana (A&M-Texarkana) adheres to the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) Substantive Change Policy. A&M-Texarkana is responsible for notifying and, when necessary, seeking approval for substantive changes from SACSCOC in accordance with policy.

### **DEFINITION**

A substantive change is defined by SACSCOC as 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.

### **APPLICATION OF POLICY**

SACSCOC accredits an entire institution. Accreditation extends to all programs and services of an institution wherever located and however delivered. This procedure applies to all university programs, modes of instruction, and locations (Off-Campus Instructional Sites).

### **PROCEDURE**

A&M-Texarkana is required to notify the THECB and SACSCOC of substantive changes and request approval, when necessary, prior to the implementation of the change. The Office of Institutional, Effectiveness, Research, and Planning (IERP) is responsible for the coordination of the substantive change process and required forms. The Institutional Accreditation Liaison (IAL) is responsible for the submission of substantive change requests to the SACSCOC.

#### *Compliance*

Substantive changes, including those required by federal regulations, include:

- 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 (i.e., credentials) 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) 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.
- Participating in the federal Prison Education Program providing Pell Grant access to confined or incarcerated students.

## **IMPLEMENTATION**

All proposed curricular changes (to include new programs, program/site closures) begin with an initial consultation with IERP to determine if there is a substantive change, and if so, determine whether notification or approval is required.

IERP uses a ticketing system to identify substantive changes related to the addition, deletion, or modification of courses, degree programs, certificate programs, distance education, and off-campus locations. When appropriate, IERP facilitates the preparation of a prospectus in accordance with the requirements outlined in the SACSCOC Substantive Change Policy and the THECB Substantive Change Guidelines.

Additionally, IERP coordinates all substantive change education and review activities to align with and satisfy THECB and SACSCOC reporting and approvals. The institution adheres to the reporting times as specified in THECB guidelines and in the Substantive Change for SACSCOC Accredited Institutions policy statement.

*This process, maintained by the IERP Office in collaboration with Academic Affairs, is posted on the IERP webpage.*

*Developed Fall 2015  
Revised Fall 2025*

## STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE

Title	Substantive Change Process
Version	V1.0
Author/Owner	IERP Staff
Effective Date	12/9/2025
Reviewed/Updated	IERP Staff
Approved By	Vice Provost

### I. Purpose

Texas A&M University-Texarkana adheres to the policies and requirements of The Texas A&M University System, the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC).

A&M-Texarkana notifies SACSCOC of changes in accordance with the Commission's substantive change policy and, when required, seeks approval prior to the initiation of changes. The Vice Provost/SACSCOC Liaison is responsible for submitting all communication regarding substantive changes to SACSCOC.

### II. Scope

Substantive changes, including those required by federal regulations, include:

- 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 (i.e., credentials) 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.
- Participating in the federal Prison Education Program providing Pell Grant access to confined or incarcerated students.

Other substantive change requirements, as well as 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 always maintaining compliance with Standard 14.2 (Substantive change) of the *Principles of Accreditation* and with the *Substantive Change Policy and Procedures* and related policies, viz.,

### III. Responsibilities

Institutional responsible parties are:

- College Curriculum Committees – approve curriculum changes.
- Division Chairs, Program Coordinators, and Deans/Executive Directors - submit a ticket in TeamDynamix for changes, additions, or deletions to courses, degree programs, certificates, etc.
- Office of Institutional Effectiveness, Research, and Planning - coordinates the submission process and packaging for substantive changes to SACSCOC and the THECB.

- SACSCOC Institutional Accreditation Liaison - submits all substantive change forms to the SACSCOC Institutional Portal.

**IV. References/Related Documents**

SACSCOC Substantive Policy Website: [Substantive Changes - SACSCOC](#)

THECB Website: [Home - Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board](#)

**V. Reporting**

The listing below provides various substantive changes, timeline for notification or approval, and documentation requirements for reporting the change to SACSCOC. These timelines are subject to change. Please check with IERP regarding any changes.

<b>Program Changes</b>					
<b>Type of Sub Change</b>	<b>Action Required by SACSCOC</b>	<b>By Whom in SACSCOC</b>	<b>Timeframe for Submission to SACSCOC Prior to Planned Implementation</b>	<b>Documentation Required by SACSCOC</b>	<b>Timeframe for Notifying the University SACSCOC Liaison Prior to Implementation</b>
Cooperative Academic Agreement with Title IV Entities (if 50% or more of a program is offered through the arrangement OR the SACSCOC institution could not deliver the program without the arrangement, i.e., it is dependent on the arrangement to deliver a program)	Notification		Any time before implementation	Notification and associated SACSCOC-required documents	At least 3 months prior to implementation
Cooperative Academic Agreement with Non-Title IV Entities – Between 25-50% of a program’s content recorded on UF transcript	Approval	Executive Council	January 1 for changes to be implemented July 1 through December 31 of the same calendar year  July 1 for changes to be implemented January 1 through June 30 of the	Prospectus	At least 10 months prior to implementation

			subsequent calendar year		
Cooperative Academic Agreement with Non-Title IV Entities – Less than 25% of a program’s content recorded on UF transcript	Notification		Any time before implementation	Notification and SACSCOC-required documentation	At least 3 months prior to implementation
Dual Academic Award – An arrangement in which a student receives instruction at two (or more) institutions in prescribed curricula leading to each institution granting academic awards at the same credential level.	Notification		Any time before implementation	Notification and SACSCOC-required documentation	At least 3 months prior to implementation
Joint Academic Award with non-SACSCOC Institution(s). A student receives instruction at two (or more) institutions, where at least one is a non-SACSCOC institution or entity, in prescribed curricula leading to the institutions granting a single academic award bearing the names, seals, and officials’ signatures of each participating institution.	Approval	Executive Council	January 1 for changes to be implemented July 1 through December 31 of the same calendar year  July 1 for changes to be implemented January 1 through June 30 of the subsequent calendar year	Prospectus	At least 10 months prior to implementation

<p>Joint Academic Award with SACSCOC Institution(s). A joint academic award is one in which a student receives instruction at two or more institutions in a prescribed curriculum leading to the institutions granting a single academic award bearing the names, seals, and officials' signatures of each participating institution.</p>	<p>Notification</p>		<p>Any time before implementation</p>	<p>Notification and SACSCOC-required documentation</p>	<p>At least 3 months prior to implementation</p>
<p>Adding a method of delivery to an existing program (applies when 50% or more is delivered by that method)</p>	<p>Approval, if on Restriction; Notification, if not on restriction</p>		<p>If Notification Only, any time before implementation.  January 1 for changes to be implemented July 1 through December 31 of the same calendar year   July 1 for changes to be implemented January 1 through June 30 of the subsequent calendar year</p>	<p>Notification and SACSCOC-required documentation</p>	<p>At least a month prior to implementation</p>
<p>Adding a new program with 50-100% new content (including certificates)</p>	<p>Approval</p>	<p>Executive Council</p>	<p>January 1 for changes to be implemented July 1 through December 31 of the same calendar year   July 1 for changes to be implemented January 1 through June 30 of the subsequent calendar year</p>	<p>Prospectus</p>	<p>At least 10 months prior to implementation</p>

Adding a new program with 25-49% new content (including certificates)	Notification		Any time before implementation	Notification and SACSCOC-required documentation	At least a month prior to implementation
Program closure (including certificates). Closure is defined as closed to admission or entry, not the cessation of instruction; i.e., closure date is when students can no longer start, not the date instruction ends.	Approval	Executive Council	January 1 for changes to be implemented July 1 through December 31 of the same calendar year  July 1 for changes to be implemented January 1 through June 30 of the subsequent calendar year	Teach-out Plan	At least 10 months prior to implementation
Program Designed for Prior Learning. Initiating a program requiring students to possess prior learning as a condition of admission requires notification prior to implementation.	Notification		Any time before implementation.	Notification and SACSCOC-required documentation	At least a month prior to implementation
Program Length Change. A change in program length in which credit hours increase or decrease by 25% or more AND students' expected time to completion increases or decreases by more than one term (including certificates)	Approval	Executive Committee	January 1 for changes to be implemented July 1 through December 31 of the same calendar year  July 1 for changes to be implemented January 1 through June 30 of the subsequent calendar year	Prospectus	At least 10 months prior to implementation
Program reopening within five years of closure	Notification		Any time before implementation	Notification and SACSCOC-required documentation	At least a month prior to implementation

## Off-campus Instructional Site / Additional Location Changes

Type of Sub Change	Action Required by SACSCOC	By Whom in SACSCOC	Timeframe for Submission to SACSCOC Prior to Planned Implementation	Documentation Required by SACSCOC	Timeframe for Notifying the University SACSCOC Liaison Prior to Implementation
Adding an off-campus instructional site at which 25-49% of a program's instruction is delivered	Notification		Any time before implementation.	Notification and SACSCOC-required documentation	At least a month prior to implementation
Adding an off-campus instructional site at which 50% or more of a program's instruction is delivered	Approval by extensive review	SACSCOC Board of Trustees	March 15 for review at the June meeting September 1 for review at the December meeting	Prospectus	At least 6 months prior to implementation
Relocating an approved off-campus instruction site. Moving instruction to a new location geographically separate from – i.e., noncontiguous to – the current location.	Notification		Any time before implementation.	Notification and SACSCOC-required documentation	At least a month prior to implementation
Relocating an approved branch campus	Approval	Executive Council	January 1 for changes to be implemented July 1 through December 31 of the same calendar year July 1 for changes to be implemented January 1 through June 30 of the subsequent calendar year	Prospectus	At least 10 months prior to implementation

Re-opening an approved off-campus instructional site within five years of the closure date	Notification		Any time before implementation.	Notification and SACSCOC-required documentation	At least a month prior to implementation
<b>Institutional Changes</b>					
Type of Sub Change	Action Required by SACSCOC	By Whom in SACSCOC	Timeframe for Submission to SACSCOC Prior to Planned Implementation	Documentation Required by SACSCOC	Timeframe for Notifying the University SACSCOC Liaison Prior to Implementation
Change in Measure of Student Progress to Completion. This includes changes from or to semester, trimester, or quarter academic calendars; time-based (i.e., calendar-based) or non-time based (i.e., competency-based) measures; and clock hour-based or credit hour-based measures.	Approval	Executive Committee	January 1 for changes to be implemented July 1 through December 31 of the same calendar year July 1 for changes to be implemented January 1 through June 30 of the subsequent calendar year	Prospectus	At least 10 months prior implementation
Governance Change. A governance change may include significantly altering governing board bylaws, the board's scope of authority or responsibility, the number of board members, or how board members are selected.	Notification + Approval	SACSCOC Board of Trustees	If Notification Only, any time before implementation. March 15 for review at the June meeting September 1 for review at the December meeting	Notification (at least six months prior to the meeting in which the prospectus will be reviewed) Prospectus	At least 10 months prior implementation

<p>Institution, Program, or Location Acquisition</p>	<p>Notification + Approval</p>	<p>SACSCOC Board of Trustees</p>	<p>If Notification Only, any time before implementation.</p> <p>March 15 for review at the June meeting September 1 for review at the December meeting</p>	<p>Description of planned change. Intended implementation date.</p> <p>Intended BOT Meeting (June or December) and year for which institution will submit prospectus.</p>	<p>At least 10 months prior implementation</p>
<p>Institutional Contingency Teach-out Plan. An institutional contingency teach-out plan must be approved if any of the following occur: a. the institution is placed or continued on probation or probation for good cause by SACSCOC, b. SACSCOC acts to end the institution's accreditation, c. the institution's state authorization is revoked, d. the institution is on provisional certification for federal financial aid by U.S. Department of Education (USDE), e. the institution is on reimbursement for federal financial aid by USDE, or f. the institution is the subject of emergency action by USDE.</p>	<p>Approval</p>	<p>Executive Committee</p>	<p>January 1 for changes to be implemented July 1 through December 31 of the same calendar year</p> <p>July 1 for changes to be implemented January 1 through June 30 of the subsequent calendar year</p>	<p>Teach-out plan</p>	<p>At least 10 months prior implementation</p>

Merger/Consolidation	Notification + Approval	SACSCOC Board of Trustees	<p>If Notification Only, any time before implementation.</p> <p>March 15 for review at the June meeting September 1 for review at the December meeting</p>	Notification (at least six months prior to the meeting in which the prospectus will be reviewed) Prospectus	At least 10 months prior implementation
Mission Change	Approval	Executive Committee	<p>January 1 for changes to be implemented July 1 through December 31 of the same calendar year</p> <p>July 1 for changes to be implemented January 1 through June 30 of the subsequent calendar year</p>	Prospectus	At least 10 months prior implementation
Ownership, Means of Control, or Legal Status Change	Notification + Approval	SACSCOC Board of Trustees	<p>If Notification Only, any time before implementation.</p> <p>March 15 for review at the June meeting September 1 for review at the December meeting</p>	Notification (at least six months prior to the meeting in which the prospectus will be reviewed) Prospectus	At least 10 months prior implementation