

SUL ROSS STATE UNIVERSITY

A Member of the Texas State University System

SRSU Policy: Substantive Change Policy and Procedures

SRSU Policy ID: APM 1.13

Policy Reviewed by: Assistant Vice President for Institutional Effectiveness

Approval Authority: Executive Vice President and Provost

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PURPOSE

The purpose of the Sul Ross State University's Substantive Change policy and Procedures is to ensure all substantive changes are reported to the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) in a timely fashion.

POLICY STATEMENT

The University is required to demonstrate continuing compliance with the SACSCOC Principles of Accreditation by adhering to all standards, requirements, policies and procedures associated with the definition and scope of a substantive change as stated in the SACSCOC Policy for Substantive Change for Accredited Institutions.

As defined by SACSCOC, a "substantive change is a significant modification or expansion of the nature and scope of an accredited institution". Any potential change that could be deemed substantive must be reported through appropriate channels to the SACSCOC Accreditation Liaison in a timely manner. Substantive changes, including those required by federal regulations include, but are 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.
- 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.

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- Entering into a cooperative academic arrangement.
- Entering into a written arrangement under 34 C.F. R Section 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.
- 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 changes 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.
- An institution is required to have a written substantive change policy and procedure. It must be approved through institutional processes and published in institutional documents accessible to those affected.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all University officers who can initiate, review, approve, and allocate resources to any changes, including those to academic and non-academic programs and activities that may be considered a substantive change according to SACSCOC. Within academic areas, such changes can originate with individuals or groups of faculty members, department committees, Department Chairs, Deans, or any other area reporting to the Provost.

In non-academic areas, potential substantive changes may originate in administrative offices or academic departments. In each area, supervisors should report the proposal to the SACSOC liaison to determine if a substantive change report is needed.

University officers are required to be familiar and comply with this policy.

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PROCEDURES

At least once each academic year, the SACSCOC Liaison will provide education and training to the academic deans and others who can initiate, review, approve, and /or allocate resources to any changes.

The SACSCOC Accreditation Liaison will oversee the process of preparing appropriate notification or approval papers in conjunction with those involved with the change.

All substantive change plans must be coordinated to allow ample time to satisfy the timeframes for notification and/or approval as set by SACSCOC. SRSU will adhere to the reporting timelines as specified in the "Substantive Change for SACSCOC Accredited Institutions" policy statement.

NON-COMPLIANCE

Failure to comply with the SACSCOC Substantive Change Policy and report substantive changes in a time-appropriate manner may results in negative actions being taken against the institution. Specifically, potential consequences include:

- Loss of Title IV Funding
- Repayment of monies received from the U.S. Department of Education for programs related to the unreported substantive change
- Sanctions or removal from membership in SACSCOC.

REVIEW

1. The SRSU Substantive Change Policy and Procedure document will be reviewed regularly by the Executive Vice President and Provost and the Executive Committee to ensure that it complies with the SACSCOC Policy for Substantive Change for Accredited Institutions.
2. Following review of the Substantive Change Policy and Procedure document by the Executive Committee, members of the Executive Committee will inform all responsible University officers and faculty in their respective areas of any changes in the policy or procedures regarding substantive change. These University officers and faculty will inform all staff and faculty in their respective areas of these changes.
3. Revisions to the SRSU Substantive Change Policy and Procedures document will be included in the most recent revisions of the Faculty Handbook and the Administrative Policy Manual posted on the SRSU web site.

REPORTING THE VARIOUS TYPES OF SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE

The different types of substantive change, the specific procedure to be used for each, their respective approval/notification requirements, and their reporting time lines are included in the table that follows.

Reporting the Various Types of Substantive Change

The different types of substantive change, the specific procedure to be used for each, their respective approval/notification requirements, and their reporting time lines are included in the table that follows. Please read the full text under the appropriate procedure for details regarding reporting.

Types of Change	Procedure or Policy	Prior Notification Required	Prior Approval Required	Documentation and Time Frame for Contacting SACSCOC
Initiating coursework or programs at a different level than currently approved	Procedure 1	No	Yes	Application for Level Change Due dates: March 15 (for June review) September 1 (for December review)
Initiating off-campus sites where student can obtain 50% or more credits toward a program (including but not limited to Early College High School, dual enrollment programs offered at a high school, and certificate programs that are not at employer's request and not on short notice)	Procedure 1	No	Yes	Cover Sheet Prospectus (See Appendix B of this document) Due dates: January 1 for 7/1-12/31 implementation July 1 for 1/1-6/30 implementation
Expanding at current degree level (<i>significant departure from current programs</i>).				
Expanding program offerings at previously approved off-campus sites by adding programs that ARE significantly different from current programs at the site AND at the institution				
Initiating degree completion programs				
Initiating a branch campus (See definition of "branch campus" on p. 3 of this document.)				
Initiating distance learning by offering 50% or more of the first program for the first time				
Relocating a main or branch campus				
Entering into a contract with an entity not certified to participate in USDOE Title IV programs if the entity provides 25% or more of an educational program offered by the SACSCOC accredited institution				

Types of Change	Procedure or Policy	Prior Notification Required	Prior Approval Required	Documentation and Time Frame for Contacting SACSCOC
Initiating dual or joint degrees involving program expansion (significant departure) or initiating a new site where student can obtain 50% or more credits toward a program	See SACSCOC policy “Agreements Involving Joint and Dual Academic Awards”	No	Yes	Cover Sheet Prospectus (See Appendix B of this document) Due dates: January 1 for 7/1-12/31 implementation July 1 for 1/1-6/30 implementation Copy of signed agreement, contact information for each institution, and additional details on non-SACSCOC institution(s) involved. See Policy
Initiating dual or joint degree with at least one institution <u>not</u> accredited by SACSCOC	See SACSCOC Policy “Agreements Involving Joint and Dual Academic Awards”	At least 6 months prior to implementation	Yes	Acceptance of notification, copy of signed agreement, contact information for each institution, and additional details on non-SACSCOC institution(s). See Policy.
Initiating a direct assessment competency-based program	See SACSCOC Policy “Direct Assessment Competency-Based Educational Programs”	Yes – Screening Form	Yes	Submit “Screening Form” with letter of notification. If Prospectus is required, Due dates: March 15 (for June review) September 1 (for December review)
<p>Initiating a merger/consolidation with another institution</p> <p>Changing governance, ownership, control, or legal status of an institution</p> <p>Acquiring any program or site from another institution</p> <p>Adding a permanent location at a site where the institution is conducting a teach-out for students from another institution that is closing</p>	See SACSCOC Policy: “Mergers, Consolidations, Change of Ownership, Acquisitions, and Change of Governance, Control, Form, or Legal Status”	Yes: December 15 (for June review); June 1 (for December review)	Yes	Cover Sheet Institutional Summary Form Prospectus (See Appendix in SACSCOC Policy: “Mergers, Consolidations, Change of Ownership, Acquisitions, and Change of Governance, Control, Form, or Legal Status”) Due dates: March 15 (for June review); September 1 (for December review)

Types of Change	Procedure or Policy	Prior Notification Required	Prior Approval Required	Documentation and Time Frame for Contacting SACSCOC
Initiating a certificate program at a new off-campus site at employer's request and on short notice (previously approved program)	Procedure 1	No	Yes	Cover Sheet Modified prospectus Contact Commission Staff.
Initiating a certificate program that is a significant departure from previously approved programs at employer's request and on short notice				
Adding a site under a U.S. military contract for a previously approved program				
Altering significantly the length of a program				
Altering significantly the educational mission of the institution				
Changing from clock hours to credit hours	Procedure 1	No	Yes	Justify reasons for change, indicate calculation of equivalency, and other pertinent information
Moving an off-campus instructional site (serving the same geographic area)	Procedure 2	Yes	No	Letter of notification with old address, new address, and implementation date
Initiating dual or joint degrees with other SACSCOC accredited institution(s)	See SACSCOC Policy "Agreements Involving Joint and Dual Academic Awards"	At least 6 months prior to implementation	No	Acceptance of notification, copy of signed agreement and contact information for each institution. See Policy.
Initiating programs or courses offered through contractual agreement or consortium	Procedure 2	Yes	No	Letter of notification and copy of signed agreement
Entering into a contract with an entity not certified to participate in USDOE Title IV programs if the entity provides less than 25% of an educational program offered by the SACSCOC accredited institution				

Types of Change	Procedure or Policy	Prior Notification Required	Prior Approval Required	Documentation and Time Frame for Contacting SACSCOC
Initiating off-campus sites where student can obtain 25-49% of credits toward a program (including but not limited to Early College High School, dual enrollment programs offered at a high school, and certificate programs that are not at employer's request and not on short notice)	Procedure 2	Yes	No	Letter of notification Including street address and implementation date
Initiating distance learning by offering 25-49 of the first program for the first time				
Closing a program, approved off-campus site, branch campus, or institution where the institution plans to teach out its own students	Procedure 3	Yes	Yes	Description of teach-out plan included with letter of notification
Closing a program, approved off-campus site, branch campus, or institution where the institution plans contracts with another institution(s) to teach-out students (Teach-out Agreement)	Procedure 3	Yes	Yes	Description of teach-out plan, copy of signed teach-out agreement(s) detailing terms included with notification

Types of Change	Procedure or Policy	Prior Notification Required	Prior Approval Required	Documentation and Time Frame for Contacting SACSCOC
Initiating a certificate program at employer's request and on short notice using existing approved courses and location	NA	No	No	NA
Initiating certificate program (not at employer's request and not on short notice) using existing approved courses and location				
Initiating off-campus sites (including Early College High School and dual enrollment programs offered at the high school) where student can obtain 24% or less of credits toward a program				
Expanding program offerings at previously approved off-campus sites by adding approved programs that ARE NOT significantly different from current programs at the site				
Expanding program offerings at previously approved off-campus sites by adding approved programs that ARE significantly different from current programs at the site but NOT at the institution				
Initiating distance learning by offering 24% or less of any program for the first time				