

**Purpose**

The purpose of this College District procedure is to detail the procedures the College District follows in order to maintain compliance with the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) Principles of Accreditation and Substantive Change for SACSCOC Accredited Institution Policy.

It is the policy of the College District to follow all procedures detailed in the SACSCOC Substantive Change Policy and this College District administrative regulation.

**Definitions**

“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.

Under federal regulations, substantive changes 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 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 nontime-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;
- Substantially increasing 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; and
- Closing an institution, a program, a method of delivery, an off-campus instructional site, or a program at an off-campus instructional site.

Federal regulations require the College District to notify or secure SACSCOC approval prior to implementing a substantive change.

The above list of changes is subject to change as federal regulations change.

**Roles and Responsibilities**

College District Employees

It is the responsibility of all College District employees to be aware of this substantive change procedure and to follow the identified procedures.

College District Cabinet

It is the responsibility of the College District cabinet to review proposed institutional changes to determine if the changes reflect a substantive change and follow the identified procedures in this procedure prior to implementing changes.

College District President	It is the responsibility of the College President to determine if Board action is needed regarding a substantive change and/or approval of substantive change notifications/requests prior to submission to the SACSCOC.
College District Board	It is the responsibility of the Board to review and approve the College District's local policy and any substantive change notifications/requests requiring Board approval prior to submission to the SACSCOC.
College District Institutional Accreditation Liaison	It is the responsibility of the College District institutional accreditation liaison to assist the College District administration with notification and/or development of substantive changes. It is also the responsibility of the College District to submit the final approved notification/substantive change to SACSCOC in advance of substantive changes and program developments in accord with the substantive change policies of SACSCOC.

**Procedures**

College District procedures include the following:

1. It is the responsibility of the College District cabinet and all College District supervisors to be familiar with the SACSCOC substantive change policy and the College District local substantive change policy.
2. All institutional changes should be vetted by supervisors prior to approval to identify if the institutional change reflects a substantive change. Supervisors are encouraged to discuss the change with the College District institutional accreditation liaison (IAL) if needed.
3. Cabinet members work with supervisors and the IAL to develop the appropriate substantive change notification and/or prospectus for approval regarding substantive changes according to the guidelines and timelines established in the SACSCOC substantive change policy.
4. The IAL submits the completed notification and/or prospectus for approval to the College President.
5. The College President reviews and approves/disapproves the substantive change.
6. The College President reviews the substantive change to determine if Board approval is necessary. If so, an agenda item is added to a Board's regular meeting.
7. The College District IAL submits the final approved substantive changes, notifications, and/or prospectus to SACSCOC according to the guidelines and within the timelines.

8. The College District IAL notifies all relevant employees of SACSCOC-approved changes and also documents the approval/disapproval in the College District SACSCOC log of communications.