

	ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE MANUAL		
	SECTION TITLE	NUMBER	PAGE
	SACSCOC ACCREDITATION-SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE	02-1104	1 OF 5
	BASED ON BOARD OF TRUSTEES' RULE AND TITLE	DATE REVISED	
6Hx7-1.6 Statements of Mission, Distinctive Values and Attributes, and Collegewide Goals	February 24, 2021		

Purpose

The purpose of this procedure is to comply with the substantive change requirements of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (“SACSCOC” or “Commission”). This procedure is applicable to all units, departments, centers and campuses.

Background Information

- A. Florida State College at Jacksonville (FSCJ / College) is accredited by the SACSCOC. The accreditation provides public documentation of institutional quality and enables the College to seek eligibility to participate in federal programs.
- B. In addition to five-year and ten-year reviews by the Commission, the College is required to follow substantive change procedures established by SACSCOC that include notification and approval by SACSCOC prior to initiating a substantive change. “Substantive Change” means a significant modification or expansion of the nature and scope of an accredited institution as defined by SACSCOC. Per SACSCOC, 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.
- C. Substantive changes include but are not limited to:
 1. Substantially changing the established mission or objectives of an institution or its programs.
 2. Changing the legal status, form of control, or ownership of an institution.
 3. Changing the governance of an institution.
 4. Relocating an institution or an off-campus instructional site of an institution (including a branch campus).
 5. Offering courses or programs at a higher or lower degree level than currently authorized.
 6. 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.



ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE MANUAL

SECTION TITLE	NUMBER	PAGE
SACSCOC ACCREDITATION-SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE	02-1104	2 OF 5
BASED ON BOARD OF TRUSTEES' RULE AND TITLE	DATE REVISED	
6Hx7-1.6 Statements of Mission, Distinctive Values and Attributes, and Collegewide Goals	February 24, 2021	

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. Initiating programs by distance education or correspondence courses.
 9. Adding an additional method of delivery to a currently offered program.
 10. Entering into a cooperative academic arrangement.
 11. 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 (1) or more of the accredited institution's educational programs.
 12. 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 (1) or more programs.
 13. Adding competency-based education programs.
 14. Adding each competency-based education program by direct assessment.
 15. Adding programs with completion pathways that recognize and accommodate a student's prior or existing knowledge or competency.
 16. Awarding dual or joint academic awards.
 17. Re-opening a previously closed program or off-campus instructional site.
 18. Adding a new off-campus instructional site/additional location including a branch campus.
 19. 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.
 20. Closing an institution, a program, a method of delivery, an off-campus instructional site or a program at an off-campus instructional site.
- D. Other substantive changes, including those required by federal regulations, include:
1. Notification of or approval by SACSCOC prior to implementing a substantive change.



ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE MANUAL

SECTION TITLE	NUMBER	PAGE
SACSCOC ACCREDITATION-SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE	02-1104	3 OF 5
BASED ON BOARD OF TRUSTEES' RULE AND TITLE	DATE REVISED	
6Hx7-1.6 Statements of Mission, Distinctive Values and Attributes, and Collegewide Goals	February 24, 2021	

2. Maintaining compliance at all times with Standard 14.2 (Substantive change) of the *Principles of Accreditation* and with the *Substantive Change Policy and Procedures*.

3. A written substantive change policy and procedure. It must be approved through institutional processes and published in institutional documents accessible to those affected and to the public. The purpose of the institution's substantive change policy and procedure is to ensure all substantive changes are reported to SACSCOC in a timely fashion as required by *Substantive Change Policy and Procedures*. Institutions are responsible for implementing and enforcing their substantive change policy and procedure.

4. Demonstrated fiscal and administrative capability to operate off-campus instructional sites.
 Note: Different or additional requirements apply to an institution on **SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE RESTRICTION**. Restriction applies if an institution has been placed on Warning, Probation or Probation for Good Cause over the prior three (3) academic years, or if an institution is under provisional certification for participation in federal financial aid programs. An institution placed or continued on Probation or Probation for Good Cause must submit to SACSCOC an institutional contingency teach-out plan within 30 days of the notification of the FSCJ District Board of Trustees action.

- E. Certain substantive changes require prior notification to SACSCOC. Other substantive changes require submission of a substantive change prospectus prior to the implementation of the substantive change. Many substantive changes require on-site committee reviews by SACSCOC. In consultation with the SACSCOC policies and staff, the College's SACSCOC Accreditation Liaison determines the applicability of SACSCOC Substantive Change policy to the above described activities.

- F. The College is dedicated to the expansion of academic opportunities through the development and offering of programs and courses offered off-site or by electronic means, in support of the College's mission. The College's SACSCOC Accreditation Liaison will be consulted prior to beginning a process that results in a substantive change. Accordingly, the College's SACSCOC Accreditation Liaison is responsible for reporting any substantive changes to the Commission.

Procedure

- A. The College has developed procedures for departments and units to follow when developing and delivering College courses off-site, electronically, or for a new program and program level, program closures and contracts or consortial agreements for instruction. Prior to developing and delivering College courses off-site, electronically or for a new program and program level, please consult these procedures. These procedures can be found online at the Accreditation website, or by contacting the College's SACSCOC Accreditation Liaison.



ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE MANUAL

SECTION TITLE	NUMBER	PAGE
SACSCOC ACCREDITATION-SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE	02-1104	4 OF 5
BASED ON BOARD OF TRUSTEES' RULE AND TITLE	DATE REVISED	
6Hx7-1.6 Statements of Mission, Distinctive Values and Attributes, and Collegewide Goals	February 24, 2021	

- B. All substantive changes must be reported to SACSCOC for notification and approval in a timely manner. All submissions will be coordinated through the College's SACSCOC Accreditation Liaison. Any unit or department initiating a substantive change to the College's current accreditation or reaffirmation must notify the College's SACSCOC Accreditation Liaison as soon as the change is considered.
- C. All substantive changes must be reported in a timely fashion to SACSCOC via the substantive change notification process. The following includes a list of common substantive change at FSCJ and the appropriate timeframe for notification to the Office of Institutional Effectiveness (OIE):
1. A minimum of six (6) months prior to implementation of change:
 - a. Method of delivery.
 - b. Initiating an off-campus site where students can obtain 25-49% of credits/clock hours of any certificate/degree (including dual enrollment sites).
 - c. Initiating a new program with 25-49% new content.
 - d. Program closures.
 2. A minimum of nine (9) months prior to implementation of change:
 - a. Altering significantly the length of a program (rule of thumb is increasing or decreasing the number of credit hours/clock hours by 25% or more).
 3. A minimum of twelve (12) months prior to implementation of change:
 - a. Offering a majority (50% or more) of the credit hours/clock hours needed to complete any degree, certificate or diploma at an off-campus site for the first time.
 - b. Initiating a new program with 50%+ new content.

Note: The above-mentioned changes need to align with SACSCOC deadlines.

- D. All questions about whether a change is substantive should be directed to the College's SACSCOC Accreditation Liaison for guidance.
- E. All correspondence with SACSCOC will be submitted by the College President or the College's SACSCOC Accreditation Liaison.



ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE MANUAL

SECTION TITLE	NUMBER	PAGE
SACSCOC ACCREDITATION-SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE	02-1104	5 OF 5
BASED ON BOARD OF TRUSTEES' RULE AND TITLE	DATE REVISED	
6Hx7-1.6 Statements of Mission, Distinctive Values and Attributes, and Collegewide Goals	February 24, 2021	

REFERENCES: 34 C.F.R. § 668.5, F.S. 1001.60, 1001.64, 1001.65, 1007.35, SACSCOC Principles of Accreditation, SACSCOC *Substantive Change Policy and Procedures*

Adopted Date: November 15, 2010

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