

POLICY NAME:	CACC Substantive Change Policy & Procedures
EFFECTIVE:	February 8, 2021
SUPERSEDES:	
CROSS-REFERENCE:	SACSCOC Substantive Change Policy and Procedures

Policy Statement

As a regionally accredited institution of higher education, Central Alabama Community College (CACC) is responsible for compliance with the substantive change requirements of the U.S. Department of Education as outlined in [34 C.F.R. §602.22](#). The College’s regional accreditor, Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC), requires all accredited member institutions to notify the Commission of substantive changes and, when required, to seek approval prior to the initiation of the changes. Member institutions are required to have a policy and procedure to ensure that all substantive changes are reported to the Commission in a timely and appropriate fashion.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure Central Alabama Community College (CACC) is compliant with the substantive change requirements as set forth by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC). This policy is applicable to all administrative units, divisions, departments, and campuses of the College.

Failure to comply with the SACSCOC Substantive Change Policy and Procedures may result in serious consequences for the College including, but not limited to, repayment of federal financial aid funds, being placed on monitoring or sanctions, or removing the College’s accreditation entirely.

Substantive Changes

A substantive change is defined by SACSCOC as a “significant modification or expansion of the nature and scope of an accredited institution.” Substantive changes can originate in academic and non-academic departments. Certain substantive changes require prior notification to SACSCOC. Other substantive changes require submission of a substantive change prospectus *prior* to implementation of the substantive change. A substantive change may also require on-site committee reviews by SACSCOC.

Substantive changes include, but are not limited to, the following:

- 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 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.
- 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.

A detailed listing of the types of substantive changes and notification procedures can be found in the related [SACSCOC Substantive Change Policy and Procedures](#).

Personnel Responsible for Implementation of Policy

<p>President, Dean of Academic Programs, Dean of Workforce and Economic Development Programs, Division Chairs, and Program Directors</p>	<p>Responsibilities include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Becoming familiar with policies and procedures in the SACSCOC Substantive Change Policy and Procedures, • Notifying the Institutional Accreditation Liaison as early as possible about proposals that may be considered substantive changes, • Providing the Institutional Accreditation Liaison with the supporting data and documentation necessary for reporting such changes to SACSCOC, and
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adhering to any timeline set forth by SACSCOC for purposes for review and prior approval of substantive changes.
Institutional Accreditation Liaison	Responsibilities include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Providing the Substantive Change Policy to all responsible parties, Maintaining a current copy of the Substantive Change Policy on the College website, Working with the Deans, Chairs, and Directors to determine whether a proposal is a substantive change and assisting with and/or generating the necessary letters, prospectus, and other documents for reporting to SACSCOC, and Submitting the requested substantive change documents to SACSCOC and coordinating any necessary follow-up action.

Policy Specifics and Procedures

Substantive changes can originate in academic and non-academic departments/units. The nature of a particular substantive change determines whether an academic or non-academic process is required. Any department/unit whose planned activity may constitute a substantive change must comply with the procedures described below *before* implementation.

The College policy and procedures will be reviewed and approved annually by the President’s Cabinet. Upon approval each year, the Institutional Accreditation Liaison will share the approved policy and procedures with all College administrators and with the College Curriculum Committee, which consists of deans, division chairs, and program directors. In addition, the Institutional Accreditation Liaison will make the College policy and procedures available at all College strategic planning sessions/meetings. Finally, the Institutional Accreditation Liaison will ensure the College Substantive Change Policy and Procedures is posted on the College website for public viewing.

Depending on the nature of the substantive change, the change requires timely reporting to SACSCOC for notification and/or approval. The SACSCOC deadlines are identified below.

- Substantive changes requiring approval by the full Board of Trustees for review and approval must be received at SACSCOC by **March 15** for review at the Board’s biannual meeting in June of the same calendar year, and by **September 1** for review at the Board’s biannual meeting in December of the same calendar year.
- The submission deadlines for substantive changes requiring approval by the Executive Council of the Board of Trustees **OR** for substantive changes requiring notification only are **January 1 for changes to be implemented Fall (July 1 through December 31) of the same calendar year**, and **July 1 for changes to be implemented Spring (January 1 through June 30) of the subsequent calendar year**.

Therefore, the Institutional Accreditation Liaison should be consulted *prior* to beginning a process that results in a substantive change. All correspondence with SACSCOC will be submitted by the College President in coordination with the Institutional Accreditation Liaison.

Procedures

The following steps will be used by faculty/staff members, divisions and units of the College when determining and reporting substantive change:

1. Anyone considering a substantive change (academic or non-academic) must notify the Institutional Accreditation Liaison immediately of the proposed change for further guidance. If the Institutional Accreditation Liaison becomes aware of a potential change through other means, the Institutional Accreditation Liaison will immediately follow-up with the faculty/staff, division, or department/unit involved to obtain more information and provide guidance related to the next steps.
2. Anyone proposing a change will be directed to complete the CACC Substantive Change Implementation Checklist to assist the Institutional Accreditation Liaison in determining the proper course related to the potential change. If modifying a program or adding a new program, the CACC Substantive Change Implementation Checklist must be routed to and approved by the College-wide Curriculum Committee, the appropriate Dean, and the President's Cabinet prior to submitting to the Institutional Accreditation Liaison for review.
3. The Institutional Accreditation Liaison will determine if the proposed change fits the definition of a substantive change as outlined in the [SACSCOC Substantive Change Policy and Procedures](#) and, if necessary, consult with the SACSCOC Vice-President assigned to the College or the SACSCOC Director of Substantive Change. ***(Note: Communication with SACSCOC must originate only from the College President or the Institutional Accreditation Liaison.)***
 - If the proposed action is determined not to be a substantive change, the Institutional Accreditation Liaison will notify the initiating Dean, Division, Department/Unit, and President's Cabinet and prepare a justification for the decision. This justification will remain on file where accreditation records are stored and will be made available to SACSCOC staff upon request.
 - If the proposed changes are determined to be substantive, the Institutional Accreditation Liaison will notify the initiating Dean, Division, Department/Unit, and President's Cabinet and determine the process and procedure for reporting the change to SACSCOC. The Institutional Accreditation Liaison will oversee the preparation of the required materials for submission to SACSCOC by following the applicable procedure and instructions located in the [SACSCOC Substantive Change Policy and Procedures](#). The initiating Dean, Division, or Department/Unit is responsible for providing all needed data, documentation, narratives, etc. to support the timely preparation of a complete set of submission materials.
4. The Institutional Accreditation Liaison, with approval from the College President, will send the submission materials to SACSCOC. ***(Note: Communication with SACSCOC must originate only from the College President or the Institutional Accreditation Liaison.)***

5. SACSCOC will notify the College President and the Institutional Accreditation Liaison of its official determination regarding the proposed substantive change. Potential responses from SACSCOC include approval of request, request for additional information, or denial of request.
6. Upon receipt of the official response from SACSCOC, the Institutional Accreditation Liaison will take the following actions:
 - Notify the appropriate Dean, Division, Department/Unit, and the President's Cabinet of the official determination with further instructions, if applicable. (***Potential responses from SACSCOC include approval of request, request for additional information, or denial of request.***)
 - Maintain a record of the official determination.

Forms and Related Documents

[CACC Substantive Change Implementation Checklist](#)

[SACSCOC Substantive Change Policy and Procedures](#)

Implementation/Revision Dates:
2015
2019
February 8, 2021