

Identifying and Reporting Substantive Changes to SACSCOC

Version 1

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| Policy | REG02.07.09 |
| Title | Identifying and Reporting Substantive Changes to SACSCOC |
| Category | Academic Affairs |
| Sub-category | Accreditation, Assessment and Other Academic Matters |
| Authority | Chancellor |
| History | First enacted July 1, 2009 as REG02.07.03 "Notification of Substantive Change to the Commission on Colleges, SACS" and as REG02.07.02 "Guidelines for Identifying Substantive Change." Approved by Chancellor's Executive Council on July 15, 2019. Non substantive edits made May 25, 2021. |
| Contact | Director of Academic Planning and Accreditation, Institutional Planning, Assessment, and Research (252) 737 - 3614 |
| Related Policies | |
| Additional References | <p>UNC REG 400.1.1[R] Regulations for Academic Program Planning and Evaluation (https://www.northcarolina.edu/apps/policy/index.php)</p> <p>UNC Letter of Intent to Develop a New Academic Degree Program (https://ipar.ecu.edu/planning/pln-acdmc/pln-acdmc-resources/)</p> <p>UNC Request to Establish a New Academic Degree Program – Any Delivery Method (https://ipar.ecu.edu/planning/pln-acdmc/pln-acdmc-new-program/)</p> <p>UNC Request to Deliver an Existing Degree Program – New Delivery Mode or Site (https://ipar.ecu.edu/planning/pln-acdmc/pln-acdmc-resources/)</p> <p>ECU Substantive Change Checklist (pdf) (https://ipar.ecu.edu/wp-content/pv-uploads/sites/130/2019/10/ECU-Sub-Chg-Checklist-2.4.2021-final.pdf)</p> <p>Substantive Change for SACSCOC Accredited Institutions (pdf) (https://cdn.ecu.edu/docs/prr-uploaded-docs/SubstantiveChange%20Policy%202021.pdf)</p> |

1. Introduction

The purpose of this Regulation is to establish the requirements, procedures and processes necessary to ensure timely coordination and notification of substantive changes involving East Carolina University to the University's

accrediting body, the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC).

2. Identifying Substantive Change

SACSCOC defines substantive change as “a significant modification or expansion of the nature and scope of an accredited institution.” These changes are identified through Federal regulations and SACSCOC Board approval, and are specified in the SACSCOC Policy Statement: *Substantive Change Policy and Procedures*.

Substantive change is based on the concept of “significant departures” from previously approved programs, instructional sites, or modes of delivery. SACSCOC defines “significant departure” as “a program that is not closely related to previously approved programs at the institution or site or for the mode of delivery in question.”

To determine whether a new program is a ‘significant departure,’ SACSCOC suggests consideration of the following questions:

- What previously approved programs does the institution offer that are closely related to the new program and how are they related?
- Will 25% or more of the program content be newly developed?
- Will significant additional equipment or facilities be needed?
- Will significant additional financial resources be needed?
- Will a significant number of new faculty members be required?
- Will significant additional library/learning resources be needed?

3. Reporting Substantive Changes

ECU will notify SACSCOC of changes in accordance with SACSCOC substantive change policy, and, when required, seek approval prior to the initiation of changes.

The SACSCOC Substantive Change Policy identifies whether the change requires notification or approval prior to implementation based on three categories:

- 3.1 Institutional changes,
- 3.2 program changes,
- 3.3 Off-campus instructional site changes.

Within the policy, each specific change within a category is accompanied by a summary of the reporting requirements. Depending on the specific change, requirements can include some combination of notification, approval, SACSCOC committee visit, and/or fee to review the substantive change.

4. ECU Procedures for Program and Initiative Review

ECU maintains compliance with the SACSCOC Policy on Substantive Change through collaborative processes of review of all new programs and initiatives at the undergraduate and graduate levels through the following procedures:

- 4.1. In early stages of development of any proposal for a new degree, certificate, site, delivery mode, or cooperative arrangement, individuals complete the ECU Substantive Change Checklist. Faculty planners complete the checklist in the institution’s curriculum and program management system as part of the review and approval process for new academic initiatives. The Academic Program Development Collaborative Team and SACSCOC Liaison review the checklist to determine whether any ECU programmatic action constitutes a substantive change.
- 4.2. At the completion of campus review and approval processes, Institutional Planning, Assessment, and Research—Academic Planning and Accreditation (IPAR/APA) prepares substantive change notifications to SACSCOC for signature by the Chancellor. IPAR/APA also maintains the ECU inventory of substantive change notifications to and responses from SACSCOC.

4.3. Academic Outreach, Continuing, and Distance Education and IPAR/APA conduct annual interviews with administrators in all colleges with off-site and DE programs to ensure accurate and timely reporting of potential substantive changes.

4.4. The Office of Global Affairs coordinates institutional review of academic collaborative arrangements with international partners. Memoranda of Understanding and Memoranda of Agreement are reported to SACSCOC in compliance with Procedure 1 and Procedure 2 substantive change procedures.

5. Implementation of Substantive Changes

No substantive change may be implemented until a letter of approval or acceptance is received from SACSCOC. Prior to receipt of the letter of approval or acceptance, any distribution of information, including advertising, must include wording that the program is pending SACSCOC approval.

East Carolina University

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