

Memorandum of Administrative Policy Substantive Change Policy

Area: Academic Affairs

Section: General

Number: 01.A.04 AP

Policy Statement

The policy of the University of Houston–Clear Lake (UHCL) is to follow the substantive change procedures of the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools–Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) and to inform SACSCOC of any substantive changes in its programs and activities in a timely manner in accordance with those procedures.

Purpose

This document establishes guidelines to ensure that UHCL remains in compliance with SACSCOC substantive change requirements. Failure to adhere to the Substantive Change policy may result in UHCL losing Title IV funding or being required to return money received for programs related to the unreported substantive change. Each 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.

Definitions

A substantive change is a significant modification or expansion of the nature and scope of an accredited institution. There are three types of substantive change:

1. Changes that require full Board of Trustees approval and will be implemented after the date of the Board Meeting.
2. Changes that require approval of the Executive Council of the Board of Trustees and will be implemented after receiving approval.
3. Changes requiring notification only and will be implemented after submitting the notification.

Monitoring and Reporting Changes Procedure

The university has developed procedures for colleges and units to follow when making changes which includes developing and delivering programs off-site, electronically, revising a program, proposing a new program or program-level change, adding a new method of delivery, program closures and contracts or consortium agreements for instruction.

To ensure compliance, administrators will consult the SACSCOC liaison prior to beginning a process that results in a substantive change **well before** the intended implementation date. All administrators whose responsibilities may involve them in actions that could constitute substantive changes will maintain a current understanding of this policy and the SACSCOC substantive change policy.

Specific requirements for substantive change types are organized by institutional changes, off-campus-instructional sites/additional location changes, and program changes. Detailed requirements for substantive changes including timelines for reporting can be found in the [SACSCOC Substantive Change Policy and Procedures](#).

The lists below are not exhaustive but provide a framework for making decisions. Decisions regarding changes made at any of these institutional levels require all other levels to be informed and consulted on such substantive changes.

Program/Course level changes would include the following; however, this list is not all inclusive:

1. Expanding a current Degree Level (A significant departure from current programs)
2. Initiating a new program with 50–100% new content is a significant departure from the institution’s existing programs and requires SACSCOC approval prior to implementation
3. Initiating a new program with 25–49% new content is a significant departure from existing programs and requires SACSCOC approval prior to implementation
4. Adding a method of instructional delivery to an existing program
5. Initiating programs or courses offered through a contractual agreement or consortium with Non-Title IV Entities, and Title IV Entities
6. Initiating Joint Academic Award with Non-SACSCOC Institutions
7. Initiating Joint Academic Award with SACSCOC Institutions
8. Changing significantly the length of a program
9. Initiating degree completion programs
10. Initiating coursework or programs at a higher or lower degree level than currently approved
11. Reopening a program (may re-open within five years of closure date)
12. Closing a program. Teach Out plans are required prior to closing.

Department or College changes would include the following; however, this list is not all inclusive:

1. Initiating an off-campus site
2. Initiating distance learning
3. No longer offering classes at an off-campus site
4. Adding significant changes in existing technology-based delivery systems in distance learning

Institutional changes would include the following; however, this list is not all inclusive:

1. Initiating/closing an off-campus site. Teach-out plans are required prior to closing.
2. Initiating distance learning at off-campus site
3. Adding significant changes in existing technology-based delivery systems in distance learning
4. Off-campus Instructional Site Relocation
5. Off-campus Instructional Site Name or Address Change
6. Expanding the institution's current degree level
7. Changing significantly the educational mission of the institution

Certain substantive changes require prior notification to SACSCOC. Other substantive changes require submission of a substantive change prospectus for approval prior to the implementation of the substantive change. Some changes require on-site committee reviews

by SACSCOC. The University's Accreditation Liaison determines the applicability of SACSCOC Substantive Change policy to proposed changes. Prior to making any changes and as soon as the change is considered, any unit or department must consult these procedures and notify the SACSCOC Accreditation Liaison. Direct questions regarding whether a change is substantive to the SACSCOC Liaison.

The SACSCOC Liaison Office will maintain an audit cycle of distance education activities. DE includes synchronous (off-campus, face-to-face and electronic-to-group) and asynchronous delivery (online). All DE activities are subject to review for potential SACSCOC considerations.

Monitoring of distance education activities for adherence to the substantive change policy will include an audit of distance education activities. Department and units must report new distance education programs and changes to existing distance education programs to the SACSCOC Liaison on October 1 and March 1. This reporting procedure must be followed at any time during the academic year that a decision is made to initiate or expand online and/or off-campus programs.

Changes Determined to be Substantive

Record of changes deemed non-substantive will be maintained by the Office of the Vice Provost.

Review and Responsibilities for Substantive Changes

Responsible Parties: Vice Provost and/or SACSCOC Liaison

Review: Every three years on or before June 1 or when SACSCOC initiates changes to the substantive change policy.

Revision Log

Revision Number: 1

- Approval Date: 09/13/2016
- Description of changes: Policy Created & Approved

Revision Number: 2

- Approval Date: 9/26/2024
- Description of changes: Policy amended to align with new SACSCOC Substantive Change Policy

Approval

Approved by:

/Dr. Christopher Maynard/

Senior Vice President of Academic Affairs and Provost

/Dr. Richard Walker/

President

September 26, 2024

Date