**Substantive Change Procedures Required to Obtain Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges Approval**

## A. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish institutional procedures for recognizing and approving substantive changes in order to ensure compliance with the current version of Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) [Substantive Change Policy and Procedures](https://sacscoc.org/app/uploads/2019/08/SubstantiveChange.pdf). This policy outlines the procedures which UTPB must follow to comply with the SACSCOC policy, Substantive Changes for SACSCOC Accredited Institutions, in adherence with U.S. Department of Education regulations (34 CFR 602.22). **Non-compliance with this policy may jeopardize The University of Texas Permian Basin’s (UTPB) accreditation and subject UTPB to associated sanctions and penalties from SACSCOC and the U.S. Department of Education.**

**B. Persons Affected**

This policy applies to any UTPB employee who can initiate, review, or approve changes that are considered substantive according to the current version of the [SACSCOC Substantive Change Policy and Procedures](https://sacscoc.org/app/uploads/2019/08/SubstantiveChange.pdf). In academic affairs, this includes faculty, assistant and associate deans, deans, vice provosts, and the provost. Other university officials in the Office of Research, Procurement Management, or the International Center might be asked to review or approve a substantive change initiative. Further, a substantive change may come directly to the attention of the president or vice presidents. These individuals are responsible for timely notification of substantive changes to the Associate Provost for Policy and Program Coordination, who is responsible for notifying or seeking approval from SACSCOC as appropriate for the substantive change.

## C. Policy

SACSCOC must approve all changes proposed by UTPB considered to be substantive according to its policy, *Substantive Changes for SACSCOC Accredited Institutions* found on the [SACSCOC website.](https://sacscoc.org/app/uploads/2019/08/SubstantiveChange.pdf) This approval must be granted **prior** to implementation of changes. Materials will be submitted to SACSCOC for approval in addition to required institutional, University of Texas System (UT System) and Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) approvals as needed.

Before the implementation of any potential substantive change, programs, departments, colleges, and schools will follow the approval process set forth below. This includes timely notification of substantive changes to the University’s employee designated as its SACSCOC Liaison. The SACSCOC Liaison/Associate Vice President (AVP) for Academic Affairs is responsible for documenting substantive changes and submitting notifications and prospectuses to SACSCOC. Please contact the SACSCOC Liaison upon becoming aware of any potential substantive change.

## D. SACSCOC Definitions and Compliance

Substantive Change: 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.

The following changes are considered substantive under federal regulations and must be approved by SACSCOC prior to implementation:

* 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 the 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.
* 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.
* Closing an institution, a program, a method of delivery, an off-campus instructional site, or a program at an off-campus instructional site

Other substantive changes, including those required by federal regulations, include:

* An institution is required to notify or secure SACSCOC approval prior to implementing a substantive change.
* An institution is responsible for maintaining compliance at all times with Standard 14.2 (Substantive change) of the Principles of Accreditation and with the Substantive Change Policy and Procedures and related policies, viz.,
  + [Agreements Involving Joint and Dual Academic Awards](https://sacscoc.org/app/uploads/2019/08/JointDualAwards.pdf) [PDF];
  + [Credit Hours](https://sacscoc.org/app/uploads/2019/08/Credit-Hours.pdf) [PDF];
  + [Direct Assessment Competency-based Educational Programs](https://sacscoc.org/app/uploads/2019/08/DirectAssessmentCompetencyBased.pdf) [PDF];
  + [Distance and Correspondence Education](https://sacscoc.org/app/uploads/2019/07/DistanceCorrespondenceEducation.pdf) [PDF];
  + [Dual Enrollment](https://sacscoc.org/app/uploads/2019/08/Dual-Enrollment.pdf) [PDF];
  + [Merger/Consolidation, Acquisition, Change of Ownership, and Change of Governance, Control, Form, or Legal Status](https://sacscoc.org/app/uploads/2019/08/Mergers.pdf) [PDF]; and
  + [Seeking Accreditation at a Higher or Lower Degree Level](https://sacscoc.org/app/uploads/2020/01/Level-Change-for-Member-Institutions-1.pdf) [PDF].
* An 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 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.
* An institution’s fiscal and administrative capability to operate off-campus instructional sites is assessed when a new site is reviewed for approval and as part of decennial and fifth year interim reviews.
* A new off-campus instructional site is subject to a substantive change committee visit. A committee visit, when necessary, is authorized when a site is approved. The committee visit ensures the site has the personnel, facilities, and resources identified by an institution in its application or prospectus and ensures the quality of instructional and support services offered at the site.
* 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 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 Board of Trustees action.

The SACSCOC Board of Trustees has approved additional substantive changes that require notification and, in some cases, approval prior to implementation.

Each substantive change type described in the procedures for [SACSCOC Substantive Change Policy and Procedures](https://sacscoc.org/app/uploads/2019/08/SubstantiveChange.pdf) for institutional changes, for program changes, and for off-campus instructional site changes – is accompanied by a graphical summary of the principal requirements:

1. The change requires either

* Notification,
* Approval, or
* Notification and Approval

1. A committee visit is either

* Required,
* Contingent on institutional characteristics, or
* Not required

1. A fee to review the substantive change is either

* Yes or
* No (see the Fee and Expenses section of the SACSCOC Substantive Change Policy for amounts; committee visit fees and expenses are separate)

1. The type of substantive change is subject to additional or different requirements if the institution is on SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE RESTRICTION, either

* Yes -or-
* No

## E. Responsibilities

1. **Institutional Level (Non-Academic or Administrative-Related) Substantive Changes  
   Deadlines:** Institutional level substantive change deadlines vary depending on the type of change.  Work with the SACSCOC Liaison/Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs for UTPB to ensure timely submission of material.  It takes a minimum of six months for submissions to be processed by the SACSCOC.
   1. President (or his/her designated representative) Duties:
      1. Be aware of the substantive change policy and recognize potential institutional level substantive changes;
      2. Inform the SACSCOC Liaison of any proposed institutional level substantive change in the form of a draft notification letter with ample time for the SACSCOC Liaison to provide the information to the SACSCOC for approval in advance of the proposed implementation date;
      3. Obtain University, UT System and THECB approval before submission to the SACSCOC for approval (if the change is not initiated by UT System);
      4. Provide the SACSCOC Liaison the necessary information and documentation required by the SACSCOC substantive change policy (upon receipt of required approvals at university and state levels); and
      5. Ensure the change is not implemented until SACSCOC approval is obtained.
2. **Academic Related Substantive Changes (College/Department/Program Level)**At the earliest stage of consideration of an academic-related change, the college dean will discuss development with the SACSCOC Liaison. If the proposal is supported by the Provost and SACSCOC Liaison and determined to be substantive for SACSCOC purposes, the college dean and the appropriate department will work with the SACSCOC Liaison to request SACSCOC approval.  (In conjunction with SACSCOC approval, a proposal that is substantive must also receive institutional, UT System and THECB approval.)

**Deadlines:** For a substantive change requiring approval by the full SACSCOC Board of Trustees (which meets biannually), to be implemented after the date of the Board meeting, the submission deadlines are

* **March 15** for review at the Board’s biannual meeting in June of the same calendar year, and
* **September 1** for review at the Board’s biannual meeting in December of the same calendar year.

For a substantive change requiring approval by the SACSCOC Executive Council of the Board of

Trustees (which meets year-round)

— OR —

for a substantive change requiring notification only, the submission deadlines are

* **January 1** for changes to be implemented July 1 through December 31 of the same calendar year, and
* **July 1** for changes to be implemented January 1 through June 30 of the subsequent calendar year
  1. College Dean Duties:
     1. Be aware of the substantive change policy and recognize potential academic-related substantive changes;
     2. Monitor substantive change proposals related to academic degree programs, certificates and courses within the college;
     3. Obtain consultation and feedback from the Dean’s Council, and the Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs before initiating any changes;
     4. Secure approval for the budget through the Provost and Vice President of Business Affairs (if funding is necessary);
     5. Initiate the approval process through the Provost and SACSCOC Liaison;
     6. Work with the appropriate department to provide the materials needed for University, UT System, THECB, and SACSCOC approvals;
     7. Ensure that any advertisement of the proposed change includes the language that it is “pending SACSCOC approval”; and
     8. Ensure the change is not implemented until SACSCOC approval is obtained.
  2. Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs Duties:
     1. Be aware of the substantive change policy and recognize potential academic-related substantive changes;
     2. Consult with college deans and provide feedback on the development of possible substantive change proposals related to academic degree programs, certificates and courses;
     3. Work with the Vice President of Business Affairs to identify funding for new proposals (if necessary);
     4. After Faculty Senate approval (Not required for Graduate Level Programs) and if the proposal is supported by the Provost, approve the substantive change proposal and route it to the President;
     5. After President’s approval, send the substantive change proposal to the THECB through UT System;
     6. Notify the SACSCOC Liaison that the proposal has been submitted to the THECB through UT System for approval;
     7. Communicate approval by the THECB to the University;
     8. Ensure that any advertisement of the proposed change includes the language that it is “pending SACSCOC approval”; and
     9. Ensure the change is not implemented until SACSCOC approval is obtained.
  3. President (or his/her designated representative) Duties:
     1. Be aware of the substantive change policy and recognize potential academic-related substantive changes;
     2. Work with the Provost to monitor all substantive change proposals related to academic degree programs, certificates and courses; and
     3. After Provost approval, provide executive level approval for the University.
  4. **SACSCOC Liaison for all substantive changes** Duties:
     1. Assist the University in complying with SACSCOC policy and procedures on substantive change and reporting substantive changes to the SACSCOC;
     2. Maintain information on SACSCOC substantive changes submitted by the University to the SACSCOC;
     3. Oversee the process of preparing appropriate notification of the substantive change and materials needed for approval according to SACSCOC requirements;
     4. Coordinate with SACSCOC and the appropriate University representative concerning needed actions and follow up activities;
     5. Inform the appropriate University personnel when SACSCOC approval is obtained (the President for institutional level changes and the President, the Provost, the appropriate Dean/Associate Dean for academic-related changes); and
     6. Make recommendations for updating this policy as SACSCOC policies and principles change.

## F. Procedures

Substantive changes cannot be implemented by UTPB until SACSCOC has been notified and, if applicable, approval is obtained. To ensure compliance with the SACSCOC substantive change timeline, those proposing any change must notify the SACSCOC Liaison/Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs well in advance of the implementation.

**Substantive Changes Requiring Notification:** For substantive changes requiring only notification, UTPB must submit a letter of notification to SACSCOC prior to implementation. Letters of notification are accepted by SACSCOC throughout the academic year but must be received prior to implementation of the change.

**Substantive Changes Requiring Approval**: For substantive changes requiring approval, UTPB must submit a prospectus and other documentation to SACSCOC prior to implementation. Certain types of changes requiring approval must be submitted to SACSCOC as much as one year in advance of implementation. Changes requiring approval will not be implemented by UTPB until approved by SACSCOC.

**Notifying the SACSCOC Liaison/Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs:** Notifications regarding anticipated substantive changes must be submitted to the SACSCOC Liaison/AVP for Academic Affairs in writing using the **Substantive Change Action Plan form**.

**Other Approvals:** Depending on the nature of the change, substantive changes in an academic program must be submitted to the UT System Board of Regents, THECB, and/or SACSCOC. If a unit has implemented any program that may be considered a substantive change without notification to the SACSCOC Liaison, it is their responsibility to do so immediately.

**G. Related Statutes or Regulations, Rules, Policies, or Standards**

[Texas Administrative Code, Title 19, Part 1, Chapter 5, Subchapter C. Rule 5.45](https://texreg.sos.state.tx.us/public/readtac$ext.TacPage?sl=R&app=9&p_dir=&p_rloc=&p_tloc=&p_ploc=&pg=1&p_tac=&ti=19&pt=1&ch=5&rl=45) – Criteria for New Baccalaureate and Master’s Degree Programs

[Texas Administrative Code, Title 19, Part 1, Chapter 5, Subchapter C. Rule 5.46](https://texreg.sos.state.tx.us/public/readtac$ext.TacPage?sl=R&app=9&p_dir=&p_rloc=&p_tloc=&p_ploc=&pg=1&p_tac=&ti=19&pt=1&ch=5&rl=46) – Criteria for New Doctoral Programs

[Texas Administrative Code, Title 19, Part 1, Chapter 4, Subchapter P](https://texreg.sos.state.tx.us/public/readtac$ext.ViewTAC?tac_view=5&ti=19&pt=1&ch=4&sch=P&rl=Y), Rules 4.255 through 4.264- Approval of Distance Education Courses and Programs for Public Institutions

[Texas Administrative Code, Title 19, Part 1, Chapter 5, Subchapter D, Rule 5.76](https://texreg.sos.state.tx.us/public/readtac$ext.TacPage?sl=R&app=9&p_dir=&p_rloc=&p_tloc=&p_ploc=&pg=1&p_tac=&ti=19&pt=1&ch=5&rl=76)- General Principles for Off-Campus Educational Units

The University of Texas Permian Basin HOP Faculty Policies- Section 2 - Curriculum Changes

[The University of Texas System Regents’ Rules and Regulations, Rule 40307](https://www.utsystem.edu/board-of-regents/rules/40307-academic-program-approval-standards), Academic Program Approval Standards

SACSCOC - [The Accreditation Liaison](http://sacscoc.org/pdf/081705/accreditation%20liaison.pdf)

SACSCOC - [Substantive Change Policy and Procedures](https://sacscoc.org/app/uploads/2019/08/SubstantiveChange.pdf)

U.S. Department of Education  [34 CFR 602.22](http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=f5d6ed4c8f0acea8358329da414f9a10&mc=true&node=se34.3.602_122&rgn=div8)

## H. Dates Reviewed or Amended

Reviewed 3/10/2021