

Substantive Change Compliance Procedure

Supplemental to [University Policy 208](#)

Updated October 11, 2021

I. Introduction

The purpose of this procedure is to describe the process the University of North Carolina at Charlotte shall use to ensure that it identifies, manages and reports substantive changes to its accrediting body, the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) in accordance with the SACSCOC Substantive Change Policy and Procedures.

II. Procedure Statement

The University of North Carolina at Charlotte will maintain compliance through collaboration across the institution and with thorough and timely reporting on areas of substantive change to SACSCOC. Responsibility for each substantive change is defined below and in the table that follows.

1. The Chancellor will sign and send to the President of the SACSCOC, as appropriate for the particular type of substantive change either:
 - a. timely notifications summarizing proposed changes, or
 - b. a timely substantive change prospectus or application.
2. The SACSCOC Accreditation Liaison, appointed by the Chancellor as required by SACSCOC, will be responsible for the following:
 - a. Ensuring that compliance with substantive change requirements is incorporated into the planning and evaluation process of the institution.
 - b. Preparing substantive change notification letters for the signature of the Chancellor in accord with the substantive change policies of the SACSCOC.
 - c. Ensuring preparation of any required substantive change prospectus or application for the signature of the Chancellor in accord with the substantive change policies of the SACSCOC.
 - d. Notifying faculty, staff and cross-functional committees regarding SACSCOC Substantive Change policies and procedures, particularly when such policies or procedures are revised by the Commission.
 - e. Maintaining a database of substantive change initiatives, action plans and status.
 - f. Informing the Senior Associate Provost of active substantive change issues.
 - g. Collaborating with the appropriate responsible administrator(s) in initiative planning and implementation for any initiative that requires substantive change notification or approval.
 - h. Serving as a contact person and communication liaison between SACSCOC staff and the institution regarding substantive change.
3. College administration, including but not limited to the Deans, Associate Deans, Department Chairs, Program Directors, Program Coordinators, faculty, and related unit directors will be responsible for the following:
 - a. Learning about and maintaining awareness of current Substantive Change policies.
 - b. Ensuring appropriate training for employees, committees, faculty, and all who have explicit responsibility for Substantive Change as outlined in the following table.
 - c. Initiating communication with the SACSCOC Accreditation Liaison when an initiative or curricular change is being considered that may be defined as Substantive Change.
 - d. Completing any approved initiative which requires SACSCOC substantive change notification or approval, and keeping the SACSCOC Accreditation Liaison informed about its status.

No Substantive Change will be implemented until a letter of approval or an acceptance of notification is received from SACSCOC. Prior to receipt of the letter of approval, any distribution of information regarding a Substantive Change, including advertising, will include wording that the program is pending SACSCOC approval.

Reporting the Various Types of Substantive Change

Types of Change	Prior Notification Required	Prior Approval Required	Documentation and Time Frame for Contacting SACSCOC
Change in Measure of Student Progress to Completion		Yes	A prospectus: Submit a substantive change prospectus using the outline provided in Appendix A for a change in measure of student progress to completion.
Competency-based Education by Course/Credit-based Approach – Institutional		Yes	A prospectus: Submit a substantive change prospectus using the outline provided in Appendix A for competency-based education by course/credit-based approach – institutional-level approval.
Distance Education – (see New Program and Method of Delivery)			Refer to the Distance and Correspondence Education policy [PDF].
Governance Change (significantly altering governing board bylaws, the board’s scope of authority or responsibility, the number of board members, or how board members are selected)	Yes (six months prior to the SACSCOC Board of Trustees meeting at which the prospectus will be reviewed)	Yes	<p>A notification to include: 1. A description of the planned change. 2. The intended implementation date. 3. The intended SACSCOC Board of Trustees meeting (June or December) and year for which the institution will submit a prospectus for review. 4. A Substantive Change Cover Sheet is not necessary for this notification.</p> <p>AND</p> <p>A prospectus: Submit a substantive change prospectus using the outline provided in the Merger/Consolidation, Acquisition, Change of Ownership, and Change of Governance, Control, Form, or Legal Status [PDF] policy.</p>
Institution Closure		Yes	A teach-out plan: Submit a teach-out plan using the outline provided in Appendix A for an institutional closure.
Institution Relocation		Yes	A prospectus: Submit a substantive change prospectus using the outline provided in Appendix A for an institution relocation
Institution, Program, or Location Acquisition	Yes (six months prior to the SACSCOC Board of Trustees meeting at which the prospectus will be reviewed)	Yes	<p>A notification to include: 1. A description of the planned change. 2. The intended implementation date. 3. The intended SACSCOC Board of Trustees meeting (June or December) and year for which the institution will submit a prospectus for review. 4. A Substantive Change Cover Sheet is not necessary for this notification.</p> <p>AND</p> <p>A prospectus: Submit a substantive change prospectus using the outline provided in the Merger/Consolidation, Acquisition, Change of Ownership, and Change of Governance, Control, Form, or Legal Status [PDF] policy.</p>

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Institutional Contingency Teach-out Plan (if the institution placed on SACSCOC probation, SACSCOC ends institution's accreditation, institution's state authorization is revoked, institution is on provisional certification for federal financial aid by U.S. Department of Education (USDE), institution is on reimbursement for federal financial aid by USDE, or institution is the subject of emergency action by USDE)		Yes	A teach-out plan: Submit a teach-out plan using the outline provided in Appendix A for an institutional contingency teach-out plan.
Level Change (initiating coursework or program at a different level than previously approved or authorized by SACSCOC)		Yes	A level change application: Submit a level change application using the outline provided in Seeking Accreditation at a Higher or Lower Degree Level [PDF] .
Merger / Consolidation	Yes	Yes	A notification to include: 1. A description of the planned change. 2. The intended implementation date. 3. The intended SACSCOC Board of Trustees meeting (June or December) and year for which the institution will submit a prospectus for review. 4. A Substantive Change Cover Sheet is not necessary for this notification. AND A prospectus: Submit a substantive change prospectus using the outline provided in the Merger/Consolidation, Acquisition, Change of Ownership, and Change of Governance, Control, Form, or Legal Status [PDF] policy.
Mission Change (fundamental alteration of the character of an institution and its portfolio of academic programs or other mission-driven activities)		Yes	A prospectus: Submit a substantive change prospectus using the outline provided in Appendix A for a mission change.

Types of Change	Prior Notification Required	Prior Approval Required	Documentation and Time Frame for Contacting SACSCOC
Ownership, Means of Control, or Legal Status Change	Yes	Yes	<p>A notification to include: 1. A description of the planned change. 2. The intended implementation date. 3. The intended SACSCOC Board of Trustees meeting (June or December) and year for which the institution will submit a prospectus for review. 4. A Substantive Change Cover Sheet is not necessary for this notification.</p> <p>AND</p> <p>A prospectus: Submit a substantive change prospectus using the outline provided in the Merger/Consolidation, Acquisition, Change of Ownership, and Change of Governance, Control, Form, or Legal Status [PDF] policy</p>
Clock-Credit Hour Conversion		Yes	A prospectus: Submit a substantive change prospectus using the outline provided in Appendix A for a clock-credit hour conversion.
Competency-based Education by Direct Assessment – Approval (each program in which 50% or more of the program may be earned through the direct assessment approach to competency-based education requires SACSCOC approval)		Yes	A prospectus: Submit a substantive change prospectus using the outline provided in the Direct Assessment Competency-based Educational Programs [PDF] policy.
Competency-based Education by Direct Assessment – Notification (each program in which 25-49% or more of the program may be earned through the direct assessment approach to competency-based education requires SACSCOC notification)	Yes		1. A completed Substantive Change Cover Sheet [PDF] . 2. The name of the program. 3. The credential of the program (e.g., associate of applied science, certificate, etc.). 4. The instructional level of the program (undergraduate or graduate if not apparent from the credential). 5. An affirmative statement that at least 25% but no more than 50% of the program may be earned through the direct assessment approach to CBE. 6. The implementation date.

Types of Change	Prior Notification Required	Prior Approval Required	Documentation and Time Frame for Contacting SACSCOC
<p>Cooperative Academic Arrangement with SACSCOC Institution(s) (agreement with an entity (or entities) to deliver program content recorded on the SACSCOC institution's transcript as its own requires notification prior to implementation if</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 50% or more of a program is offered through the arrangement <p>— OR —</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the SACSCOC institution could not deliver the program without the arrangement, i.e., it is dependent on the arrangement to deliver a program) 	Yes		<p>1. A completed Substantive Change Cover Sheet [PDF]. 2. An affirmative statement that the institution will record credits under the arrangement (or other measures of completion) on its academic transcripts as awarded by the institution. 3. An explanation of which condition(s) defined above are met that require the arrangement to be submitted as notification. 4. The program(s) for which credits earned under the arrangement will apply. 5. A copy of a signed and dated memorandum of agreement or other document explaining the scope and responsibilities of each partnering institution or entity. 6. The implementation date.</p>
<p>Cooperative Academic Arrangement with Non-Title IV Entity (agreement with an entity (or entities) not certified to participate in U.S. Department of Education title IV programs to deliver 25-50% of a program's content recorded on the SACSCOC institution's transcript as its own)</p>		Yes	<p>A prospectus: Submit a substantive change prospectus using the outline provided in Appendix A for a Cooperative Academic Arrangement with Non-Title IV Entities – Approval.</p>
<p>Cooperative Academic Arrangement with Non-Title IV Entity (agreement with an entity (or entities) not certified to participate in U.S. Department of Education title IV programs to deliver less than 25% of a program's content recorded on the SACSCOC institution's transcript as its own - see exception in the Substantive Change Policy and Procedures)</p>	Yes		<p>1. A completed Substantive Change Cover Sheet [PDF]. 2. An affirmative statement that the institution will record credits under the arrangement (or other measures of completion) on its academic transcripts as awarded by the institution. 3. The name and credential of each program to which credits earned under the arrangement will apply. 4. The maximum percentage of the total program requirements that will be earned under the agreement; identify this for each program for which credits earned under the arrangement will apply. 5. A copy of a signed and dated memorandum of agreement or other document explaining the scope and responsibilities of each partnering institution or entity. 6. The names and contact information of the principal parties at the institution and at each participating entity (or entities); this may be included in the memorandum of agreement. 7. The implementation date.</p>

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<p>Correspondence Education (a learning process in which the institution provides instructional materials and examination, by mail or electronic transmission, to students who are separated from the instructor. Interaction between the instructor and the student is limited, is not regular and substantive, and is primarily initiated by the student. Courses are typically self-paced at the student's discretion)</p>		<p>Yes</p>	<p>Refer to the distance education requirements in this document and to the Distance and Correspondence Education policy [PDF].</p>
<p>Dual Academic Award (arrangement in which a student receives instruction at two (or more) institutions in prescribed curricula leading to each institution granting academic awards at the same credential level. The award granted by each institution bears only its name.)</p>	<p>Yes</p>		<p>1. A completed Substantive Change Cover Sheet [PDF]. 2. The name of each participating institution. 3. The program name (to indicate the discipline) and credential (e.g., Certificate of Credit, Master of Business Administration, etc.) to be awarded by each participating institution. 4. The instructional level of the academic awards (undergraduate or graduate, if not obvious by the credential to be awarded). 5. A copy of a signed and dated memorandum of agreement between or amongst all participating institutions to include terms, scope, and responsibilities of each institution. 6. The names and contact information of the principal parties at each institution; this may be included in the memorandum of agreement. 7. A statement affirming the academic award granted by the SACSCOC accredited institution complies with Standard 9.4 (institutional credits for an undergraduate degree) or Standard 9.5 (institutional credits for a graduate / professional degree). 8. The implementation date.</p>
<p>Joint Academic Award with non-SACSCOC Institution(s) or Entity(ies) (student receives instruction at two (or more) institutions, where at least one is a non-SACSCOC institution or entity, in prescribed curricula leading to the institutions granting a single academic award bearing the names, seals, and officials' signatures of each participating institution)</p>		<p>Yes</p>	<p>A prospectus: Submit a substantive change prospectus using the outline provided in Appendix A for joint academic award with non-SACSCOC institution(s) or entity(ies).</p>

Types of Change	Prior Notification Required	Prior Approval Required	Documentation and Time Frame for Contacting SACSCOC
Joint Academic Award with SACSCOC Institution(s) (a student receives instruction at two or more institutions in a prescribed curriculum leading to the institutions granting a single academic award bearing the names, seals, and officials' signatures of each participating institution)	Yes		1. A completed Substantive Change Cover Sheet [PDF] . 2. A copy of a signed and dated agreement between or amongst all participating institution. 3. The name of the program (to clearly indicate the discipline). 4. The credential to be awarded (e.g., Graduate Certificate, Doctor of Philosophy, etc.). 5. The instructional level of the program – undergraduate or graduate – if not obvious from the credential. 6. Name and contact information for the primary responsible party at each institution 7. The implementation date.
Method of Delivery – Notification (adding a method of instructional delivery to an existing program – see exceptions in the Substantive Change Policy and Procedures – Notification	Yes		1. A completed Substantive Change Cover Sheet [PDF] . 2. The name of the program (to indicate the discipline). 3. The credential to be awarded (e.g., Associate of Arts, Master of Accounting). 4. The instructional level (undergraduate or graduate, if not obvious from the credential). 5. The method of delivery to be added: competency-based education, distance education, or face-to-face instruction. 6. The implementation date.
New Program – Approval (a new program with 50-100% new content- see exception in the Substantive Change Policy and Procedures)		Yes	A prospectus: Submit a substantive change prospectus using the outline provided in Appendix A for new program approval.
New Program – Notification (a new program with 25-49% new content- see exception in the Substantive Change Policy and Procedures	Yes		1. A completed Substantive Change Cover Sheet [PDF] . 2. The name of the program (to indicate the discipline). 3. The credential to be awarded (e.g., Associate of Applied Science, Bachelor of Music, Master of Science, etc.). 4. The instructional level (undergraduate or graduate, if not obvious from the credential). 5. The method(s) of delivery: competency-based education, distance education, or face-to-face instruction. 6. The implementation date.
Program Closure (closed to admission or entry, not the cessation of instruction; i.e., closure date is when students can no longer start; it includes ending a program at all locations or by all methods of delivery, but also includes ending a student's completion option at a specific location or by a specific method of delivery)		Yes	A teach-out plan: Submit a teach-out plan using the outline provided in Appendix A for a program closure.

Types of Change	Prior Notification Required	Prior Approval Required	Documentation and Time Frame for Contacting SACSCOC
Program Designed for Prior Learning – Approval (applies only to institutions on SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE RESTRICTION)		Yes	A prospectus: Submit a substantive change prospectus using the outline provided in Appendix A for a program designed for prior learning.
Program Designed for Prior Learning – Notification (initiating a program requiring students to possess prior learning as a condition of admission requires notification prior to implementation - see exception in the Substantive Change Policy and Procedures)	Yes		1. A completed Substantive Change Cover Sheet [PDF] . 2. The name of the program (to include the program's discipline). 3. The credential to be awarded (e.g., Bachelor of Applied Science, Master of Professional Studies, etc.). 4. The program's instructional level (undergraduate or graduate, if not obvious from the credential). 5. A description of the prior learning required as a condition of admission. 6. A description of how the institution a. will assess prior learning, b. award credit, if applicable, for prior learning, c. establish the validity of its prior learning assessment, d. how faculty are involved in the assessment of prior learning, e. how the faculty involved in the assessment of prior learning are qualified in the disciplines in which credit for prior learning is awarded, and f. how the institution, with faculty involvement, periodically assesses third parties on which it relies for prior learning assessment, if applicable. 7. The implementation date.
Program Length Change (program credit hours (or an equivalent or comparable measure of progress such as clock hours or demonstrated competencies) increase or decrease by 25% or more — AND — students' expected time to completion increases or decreases by more than one term or its equivalent or comparable measure - see exception in the Substantive Change Policy and Procedures)		Yes	A prospectus: Submit a substantive change prospectus using the outline provided in Appendix A for a program length change.

Types of Change	Prior Notification Required	Prior Approval Required	Documentation and Time Frame for Contacting SACSCOC
Program Re-open (A closed program may re-open within five years of the closure date by submitting notification. The closure date is the date the program was closed to admission. If more than five years have elapsed, the program is subject to new program notification or approval.)	Yes		1. The name of the program (to include its discipline). 2. The credential of the program (e.g., Diploma, Master of Education, etc.). 3. The instructional level of the program (if not obvious from the credential). 4. The closure date (date of last admission) of the program as submitted to SACSCOC for closure approval. 5. The date SACSCOC approved the closure. 6. The case identification (Case ID) from the SACSCOC closure approval letter or, if there is no Case ID, a copy of the SACSCOC approval letter. 7. A statement of assurance that the institution has adequate instructional space and equipment, financial resources, library and learning/information resources, student support services appropriate to the programs, and faculty members qualified in the programs discipline to support the re-opening of the program. 8. The implementation date, i.e., the date new students will matriculate.
Off-campus Instructional Site Notification (an off-campus instructional site at which 25-49% of a program's instruction is delivered)	Yes		1. A completed Substantive Change Cover Sheet [PDF] . 2. Site name (must be unique, i.e., it cannot be the same as an institution's existing site). 3. The physical address or location of the site (i.e., no post office box numbers only). 4. Implementation date.
Off-campus Instructional Site Approval (including branch campus) (an off-campus instructional site at which 50% of a program's instruction is delivered - see Substantive Change Policy and Procedures for Extensive Review and Limited Review)		Yes	A prospectus: Submit a substantive change prospectus using the outline provided in Appendix A for off-campus instructional site approval by extensive review OR A prospectus: Submit a substantive change prospectus using the outline provided in Appendix A for off-campus instructional site approval by limited review.
Off-campus Instructional Site Relocation-Non-branch campus (moving instruction to a new location geographically separate from – i.e., noncontiguous to – the current location - see Substantive Change Policy and Procedures for Guidelines)	Yes		What to submit 1. A completed Substantive Change Cover Sheet [PDF] . 2. The name and address of the site at its current location. The name and address must match the name and address on record with SACSCOC. The name and addresses on record can be verified via the institutional portal or via the institutional information available to the public on the SACSCOC website. 3. The name and address of the site at its new location. 4. The implementation date, i.e., the effective date of the move. 5. A statement stipulating there will be no overlap of instruction at the two locations.
Off-campus Instructional Site Relocation-Branch campus		Yes	A prospectus: Submit a substantive change prospectus using the outline provided in Appendix A for off-campus instructional site relocation of a branch campus.

Types of Change	Prior Notification Required	Prior Approval Required	Documentation and Time Frame for Contacting SACSCOC
Off-campus Instructional Site Name or Address Change (includes renaming a street or road, adding a qualifier to a street name, changing a suite or room number, and changing a ZIP code)	Yes		1. A completed Substantive Change Cover Sheet [PDF] . 2. The current name and address of the site. The name and address must match the name and address on record with SACSCOC. The name and addresses on record can be verified via the institutional portal or via the institutional information available to the public on the SACSCOC website. 3. The new name and/or address of the site (must be unique, i.e., it cannot be the same as an institution's existing site). 4. The implementation date (i.e., the effective date) of the change. 5. A statement stipulating the name and/or address change does not include a change of instructional location as described above.
Off-campus Instructional Site Closure (applies to notified sites and approved sites)		Yes	A teach-out plan: Submit a teach-out plan for an off-campus instructional site provided in Appendix A.
Off-campus Instructional Site Re-open (An off-campus instructional site previously approved for closure may be re-opened within five years of the closure date. The closure date is the date the site was closed to admission.)	Yes		1. A completed Substantive Change Cover Sheet [PDF] . 2. The name and address of the site as it appears on the SACSCOC letter approving the site's closure. 3. The date SACSCOC approved the site's closure and either (1) the closure's case identification number (Case ID) found on the closure approval letter or (2) a copy of the closure approval letter. 4. The name of the site upon its re-opening. 5. The implementation date (i.e., the effective date) of the re-opening. 6. An affirmative statement by the institution a. assuring the site remains appropriate for instruction and conducive for the specific type of instruction to be delivered at the site, including any specialized instructional equipment, materials, laboratories and supplies, and instructional support materials necessary; and b. assuring students at the site will have adequate access to student support services and library and learning/information resources appropriate to the instruction offered at the site.