



## Substantive Change Policy

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Sources: SACSCOC Policy on Substantive Change University System of Georgia Types of Substantive Change/ Program Modification	Updated:
Responsible Parties: Provost's Office/SACS Liaison	Page(s): Page 1 of 2

### I. Purpose

Georgia Southern University's Substantive Change Policy follows the policies in effect at our accrediting body, the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) as well as at the University System of Georgia (USG). All campus units need to be aware of both of these policies when submitting curriculum changes; however, the Provost's Office holds responsibility for communicating all substantive changes to the Board of Regents and SACSCOC on behalf of the President of Georgia Southern University.

### II. Policy Statement

*SACSCOC Substantive Change Policy (<http://www.sacscoc.org/SubstantiveChange.asp>)*

Substantive change is a significant modification or expansion in the nature and scope of an accredited institution. The types of substantive change and the procedures for addressing them appropriately may be found in the Commission's [Policy on Substantive Change](#).

- Some changes, such as offering courses online that amount to less than 25% of the coursework needed to complete a degree, certificate or diploma, do not need to be reported to the Commission.
- Others, such as offering from 25% to 49% of the coursework required for a program online, simply require that the Commission be notified in advance of the implementation of the change. The [letter of notification](#) should include the name of the actual change, implementation date, street address if it involves a new site, and the credential being offered.
- Larger scale changes, such as adding significantly different programs to the academic curriculum or offering a majority of the coursework needed to complete a degree, certificate or diploma online, require written notification at least 6 months in advance and approval of a [prospectus](#), which must be submitted at least 3 months prior to the anticipated implementation date.
- Institutions seeking to offer coursework at a more advanced level than that for which they are currently approved must notify the Commission of their intent at least 12 months in advance, and submit an [application for level change](#) by April 15 for review at the June meeting of the Board of trustees or by October 1 for review at the December meeting.

Prospectuses and applications for level change should include a [Faculty Roster \(Faculty Roster Instructions\)](#), presenting the qualifications of each faculty member in the program to teach the courses they are assigned.

It is expected that the CEO or a designated representative of an institution will notify the Commission President of substantive changes at that institution. Every institution has an [Accreditation Liaison](#) whose charge is to ensure compliance with accreditation requirements. The Accreditation Liaison should take the time to become familiar with the Commissions' policies and procedures, ensure that substantive changes are recognized and reported in a timely fashion, and consult with the institution's COC staff member about any questions.

Certain types of substantive changes, such as adding branch campuses, level changes, mergers/consolidations, and changes in governance require a visit by a substantive change committee to determine continued compliance with the [Principles of Accreditation: Foundations for Quality Enhancement](#). When a committee visit has been authorized by the President of the Commission, the institution will be asked to provide documentation of the impact of the change on selected requirements in the *Principles of Accreditation*.

#### *University System of Georgia Policy*

[\(http://www.usg.edu/academic\\_programs/changes/types\\_of\\_substantive\\_change\\_program\\_modification/\)](http://www.usg.edu/academic_programs/changes/types_of_substantive_change_program_modification/)

Substantive change and/or program modification requests may be made on two different levels: curricular change or significant alteration of mission and academic priorities.

#### *Curricular Change (Individual Program)*

Curricular changes involve the substantive redirection of an academic program which has been precipitated by national norms, disciplinary norms, accreditation requirements for continued good standing, and other factors attributable to strengthening degrees and majors. Such action requires Board approval and generally depicts how the program has been revised to ensure that students receive content instruction that is conducive to successful outcomes.

The University System of Georgia's Substantive Change form is available at the following website: [http://www.usg.edu/academic\\_programs/changes/](http://www.usg.edu/academic_programs/changes/) (see Substantive Change Form: Individual Program Curriculum Revision).

## **IV. Procedures (if applicable)**

### Curriculum Substantive Changes

The Provost's Office reviews agenda items submitted and approved at the Undergraduate Committee and Graduate Committee meetings. This review includes identifying any actions which require the institution to communicate to the University System Office and/or SACSCOC. Working with the applicable unit, the Provost's Office sends this communication forward on the appropriate USG and SACSCOC forms, following institutional approval of the action in question.

### Non-Curriculum Substantive Changes

For non-curriculum substantive changes, it is the responsibility of the institution's SACS Accreditation Liaison to advise the Provost's Office of actions that need to be taken to remain in compliance with USG and SACSCOC.

Typically, substantive prospectuses are not submitted to SACSCOC until the institution receives USG Board of Regents approval. Securing this approval can take several months. Moreover, most actions need to be submitted to SACSCOC at least 6 months in advance of the implementation date (see SACSCOC policy for specific timeframes). Given these timeframes, it is critical that units begin the process two or three years ahead of the actual implementation date.