

Policies and Procedures for Reporting Substantive Change

As a member institution of the SACS Commission on Colleges, Florida Atlantic University is required to notify the Commission of any proposed substantive changes in accordance with SACS policy and, when necessary, seek approval prior to the initiation of these changes. The University is also required to have a policy and procedure in place to ensure that all substantive changes are reported to the Commission in a timely manner.

"Substantive Change" is defined by the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) as a "significant modification or expansion of the nature and scope of an accredited institution." Under federal regulations, substantive change includes but is not limited to:

- Any change in the established mission or objectives of the institution.
- Any change in legal status, form of control, or ownership of the institution.
- The addition of courses or programs that represent a significant departure, either in content or method of delivery, from those that were offered when the institution was last evaluated.
- The addition of courses or programs of study at a degree or credential level different from that which is included in the institution's current accreditation or reaffirmation.
- A substantial increase in the number of clock or credit hours awarded for successful completion of a program.
- The establishment of an additional location geographically apart from the main campus at which the institution offers at least 50 percent of an educational program.
- The establishment of a branch campus.
- Closing a program, off-campus site, branch campus or institution.
- Entering into a collaborative academic arrangement such as a dual degree program or a joint degree program with another institution.
- Acquiring another institution or a program or location of another institution.
- Adding a permanent location at a site where the institution is conducting a teach-out program for a closed institution.
- Entering into a contract by which an entity not eligible for Title IV funding offers 25% or more of one or more of the accredited institution's programs.

Implementation of a change that clearly is or may be substantive cannot occur until the university notifies SACS of its intention and receives approval if required. Failure to report these and other planned substantive changes (described in the table below) can result in loss of accreditation of the university's degree and certificate programs. SACS' specifications for actions that constitute substantive change, in addition to the required information, process, and timelines for notification and approval, appear in the table attached hereto.

It is the responsibility of the provost, the vice-presidents, and all other members of Senior Staff to be aware of proposed changes in their respective areas that rise to the level of a substantive change and to notify FAU's SACS Accreditation Liaison in a timely fashion.

SACS-related information, policies and procedures, as well as links to Commission on Colleges websites and documents shall be posted on the SACS liaison's website at <http://www.fau.edu/sacspolicy>. Following annual review at the beginning of each academic year, a notice outlining the University's responsibilities and providing the website location will be distributed electronically by FAU's SACS liaison to the provost, the vice-presidents, and all other members of Senior Staff who should disseminate it as necessary.

In many cases, substantive changes will also require Board of Trustees and/or Board of Governors approval prior to implementation. In the event that BOG approval is required, the date that notification will be provided to the SACS Accreditation Liaison will be the date that BOT approval is received.

Revised: July 2012

Office of the SACS Accreditation Liaison

VP for Strategic Planning and Information Technology

Substantive Change Additional Information/Guidelines

The Southern Association of Colleges and School's policy statement on Substantive Change, ("Substantive Change for Accredited Institutions of the Commission on Colleges," edited August, 18, 2011), requires the institution, under certain instances, to notify or seek approval prior to the initiation or expansion of programs.

Please review the following table for details on the types of changes that fall under this category and the documentation that must accompany the report of substantive change. This table presents the most common forms of substantive change. For a full list or for further information, please go to:

<http://www.sacscoc.org/pdf/081705/Substantive%20change%20policy.pdf>

Source: Excerpt from "Reporting the Various Types of Substantive Change," <i>Substantive Change for Accredited Institutions of the Commission on Colleges</i>, edited August, 18, 2011, SACSCOC Website.					
Types of Change	Procedure	Prior Notification Required	Time Frame for Contacting COC	Prior Approval Required	Documentation
Initiating a branch campus (See definition of "branch campus" – SACSCOC website.)	1	Yes	6 months	Yes	Prospectus
Relocating a main or branch campus	1	Yes	6 months	Yes	Prospectus
Moving an off-campus instructional site (serving the same geographic area)	2	Yes	Prior to implementation	No	Letter of notification with new address and starting date
Altering significantly the length of a program	1	Yes	6 months	Yes	Prospectus
Expanding at current degree level (significant departure from current programs)	1	Yes	6 months	Yes	Prospectus
Initiating degree completion programs	1	Yes	6 months	Yes	Prospectus
Expanding program offerings at previously approved off-campus sites					
...adding programs that are significantly different from current programs <u>at the site</u>	2	Yes	Prior to implementation	No	Letter of notification
...adding programs that are NOT significantly different from current programs <u>at the site</u>	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Initiating off-campus sites (including Early College HS programs offered at the high school)...					
Student can obtain 50 percent or more credits toward program	1	Yes	6 months	Yes	Prospectus
Student can obtain 25-49 percent of credit	2	Yes	Prior to implementation	No	Letter of notification

Initiating a certificate program at employer's request/short notice...					
...at a new off-campus site (previously approved program)	1	Yes	Approval required prior to implementation	Yes	Modified Prospectus
...that is a significant departure from previously approved programs	1	Yes	Approval required prior to implementation	Yes	Modified Prospectus
Initiating other certificate programs...					
At a new off-campus site (previously approved program)	1	Yes	6 months	Yes	Prospectus
That are a significant departure from previously approved programs.	1	Yes	6 months	Yes	Prospectus
Initiating distance learning... ..					
Offering 50 percent or more of a program for the first time (Adding subsequent programs requires advance notification only for programs that are significant departures from the originally approved programs)	1	Yes	6 months	Yes	Prospectus
.....Offering 25-49 percent	2	Yes	Prior to implementation	No	Letter of notification
Initiating programs or courses offered through contractual agreement or consortium	2	Yes	Prior to implementation	No	Letter of notification and copy of signed agreement
Initiating joint or dual degrees with another institution: (Review SACS' "Collaborative Academic Arrangements: Policy and Procedures.")					
Joint programs with another SACSCOC accredited institution	2	Yes	Prior to implementation	No	Copy of signed agreement and contact info for each institution
Joint programs with an institution NOT accredited by the SACSCOC	1	Yes	6 months	Yes	Prospectus
Dual programs	2	Yes	Prior to implementation	No	Copy of signed agreement and contact info for each institution
Entering into a contract with an entity not certified to participate in USDOE Title IV programs ... if the entity provides					
25% or more of an educational program offered by the COC accredited institution	1	Yes	6 months	Yes	Prospectus
... if the entity provides less than 25% of an educational program offered by the accredited institution	2	yes	6 months	no	Copy of the signed agreement

Closing a program, approved off-campus site, branch campus, or institution:					
....Institution to teach out its own students (Teach-out Plan)	3	Yes	Immediately following decision to close	Yes	Description of teach-out plan included with letter of notification
...Institution contracts with another institution to teach-out students (Teach-out Agreement)	3	Yes	Immediately following decision to close	Yes	Description of teach-out plan, copy of signed teach-out agreement detailing terms included with notification

Form prepared: May 2012
Office of the SACS Accreditation Liaison/
VP for Strategic Planning & OIT