

Policy Title: Substantive Change Requirements

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Responsible Executive: Provost

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Responsible Office: Office of Institutional Effectiveness

Substantive Change Requirements

Policy Statement

Substantive change is a federal term for any “significant modification of the nature and scope of an accredited institution.” Baylor University’s institutional accrediting agency, the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC), is required by the federal government to monitor compliance with the substantive change policy and to approve any major changes. The types of substantive change and the institutional procedures for addressing them can be found in this policy and the related SACSCOC Policy on Substantive Change.

Reason for the Policy

The U.S. Department of Education (USDE) and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) have established policies and procedures for universities to report substantive changes related to the institution’s curriculum and operations. The reporting process is designed to ensure the quality and continuity of educational programs offered to students. Failure of an institution to gain approval for substantive changes involving programs that qualify for federal financial assistance could result in the institution jeopardizing such funding. Other consequences associated with non-compliance may include sanctions, penalties and loss of accreditation.

Individuals/Entities Affected by this Policy

All Baylor University departments and programs

Exclusions

NONE

Related Documents and Forms

Other Documents

Accreditation Policy: [Substantive Change for SACSCOC Accredited Institutions](#)

Federal Regulations: [34 CFR § 602.22 – Substantive change](#)

Forms and Tools

The following forms and tools are available on the [Baylor Substantive Change website](#):

- New Program Review Form
 - Program Closure Review Form
 - New Off-Campus Instructional Site Form
 - Collaborative Agreement Review Form
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Definitions

These definitions apply to terms as they are used in this policy and are consistent with or identical to the SACSCOC definitions.

Approval	An official action by the SACSCOC Board of Trustees enabling an institution to implement a proposed substantive change. All changes requiring approval are defined in Substantive Change Policy and Procedures. An institution secures approval by submitting a substantive change prospectus or application subject to satisfactory review by the Board of Trustees.
Branch Campus	An off-campus instructional site that is independent of the main campus. It is considered independent if it <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. is permanent;2. offers courses in educational programs leading to a degree, diploma, certificate, or other for-credit credential;3. has its own faculty and administrative or supervisory organization; and4. has its own budgetary and hiring authority.
Closure	The ending of instruction <ul style="list-style-type: none">• in an educational program,• at off-campus instructional site,• in an educational program at an off-campus instructional site or main campus,• by a method of delivery, or• at an entire institution <p>• such that a student cannot complete their program of study as planned. (See also <i>teach-out agreement and teach-out plan</i>)</p>
Competency-based Education	A method of delivery in which competencies are learned through interaction with faculty and an academic credential is earned based on what students demonstrate they can do. A competency is a well-defined statement of what a person can do as a result of learning. Progression and completion are measured by demonstrated attainment of competencies.
Cooperative Academic Arrangement	An agreement between a SACSCOC-accredited institution and another entity (or entities) to deliver program content recorded on the SACSCOC institution's transcript as its own (see SACSCOC Standard 10.9). Examples include geographic or denominational consortia, statewide distance education agreements, collaborative agreements with international institutions, and contractual instruction, among others.

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Correspondence Courses	Courses in which students and instructors are not in the same locations and in which instructional materials and learning assessments (such as examinations, assignments, creative works, etc.) are delivered electronically or by mail. Interaction between instructor and student is limited, is not regular and substantive, and is primarily initiated by the student. Courses are usually self-paced within limits.
Distance Education	A method of delivery in which the majority of instruction occurs when students and instructors are not in the same location. It includes synchronous (live or in real-time) and asynchronous (not live or in real-time) instruction. <i>(See also method of delivery)</i>
Dual Academic Award	A student receives instruction at two (or more) institutions in prescribed curricula leading to each institution granting academic awards at the same credential level. <i>(See also joint academic award)</i>
Face-to-face Instruction	A method of delivery in which the majority of instruction occurs when students and instructors are in the same location. <i>(See also method of delivery)</i>
Federal Regulations	Rules and regulations of the U.S. Department of Education (USDE) as codified in the Code of Federal Regulation (CFR) including but not limited to 34 CFR § 600, 602, 603, 654, 668, and 674 (Federal Register, Vol. 84, No. 212, November 1, 2019/Rules and Regulations; pp. 58834-58933), viz., § 600.2 (definitions), § 602.22 (substantive changes and other reporting requirements), and § 602.24 (additional procedures certain institutional agencies must have).
Geographically Apart	Non-contiguous locations independent of distance.
Joint Academic Award	A student receives instruction at two (or more) institutions in prescribed curricula leading to the institutions granting a single academic award bearing the names, seals, and officials' signatures of each participating institution. <i>(See also dual academic award)</i>
Method of delivery	The principal method by which instruction is delivered to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • competency-based education (all forms), • distance education, and • face-to-face instruction.
Notification	An official communication from an institution to SACSCOC as defined in <i>Substantive Change Policy and Procedures</i> . A notification is complete only when accepted by SACSCOC upon satisfactory review by staff. <i>(See also approval)</i>
Off-Campus Instructional Site / Additional Location	A location <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • geographically apart from an institution's sole main campus and • where instruction is delivered.
Program	A coherent course of study leading to a for-credit credential including a degree, diploma, certificate, or other generally recognized credential. Exception: General education, for substantive change purposes, is usually considered a program even if a credential is not awarded.
Substantive Change Restriction	Additional or different requirements for institutions meeting defined criteria. The criteria are defined in this policy and the additional or different requirements are identified for each substantive change type. These restrictions and the criteria for which institutions are affected are required by federal regulations.

3. Substantive Change Requirements

Teach-out Agreement	An optional written agreement with an institution or entity under which students covered by a teach-out plan may complete their programs of study. A teach-out agreement may include student eligibility criteria, time limits, fee waivers, tuition parity, or other negotiated terms. <i>(See also closure and teach-out plan)</i>
Teach-out Plan	A written plan developed by an institution for students to complete their programs of study because it decided to end a program, off-campus instructional site, method of delivery, or to close the institution. A teach-out plan provides an orderly process, the equitable treatment of students, minimal disruption and additional costs to students, and covers all enrolled students regardless of their progress to completion. <i>(See also closure and teach-out agreement)</i>

Contacts

Subject	Contact	Telephone	Office email/web site
Substantive Change Questions	Office of Institutional Effectiveness	254-710-2414	ie@baylor.edu

Responsibilities

President, Vice Presidents, Provost, Vice Provosts, Deans, Associate Deans, Department Chairs, and Program Directors	<p>President, Vice Presidents, Provost, Vice Provosts, Deans, Associate Deans, Department Chairs, and Program Directors are responsible for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Becoming familiar with policies and procedures in the SACSCOC substantive change document, • Notifying the University-appointed Accreditation Liaison as early as possible about proposals that may be considered substantive changes, • Providing the Accreditation Liaison with the supporting data and documentation necessary for reporting such changes to SACSCOC, • Adhering to any timeline set forth by SACSCOC for purposes of review and prior approval of substantive changes found at the end of this policy.
University-Appointed Accreditation Liaison	<p>The University-appointed Accreditation Liaison is responsible for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing the substantive change policy to all Vice Presidents (all levels), Deans (and Associates), and Directors on an annual basis, • Maintaining a current copy of the SACSCOC policy on the University's Office of Institutional Effectiveness website, • Working with the Vice Presidents, Deans (and Associates), Chairs, and Directors to determine whether a proposal is a substantive change and to generate the necessary letters, prospectus, and other documents for reporting to SACSCOC, • Submitting the requested substantive change documents to SACSCOC, and • Coordinating any necessary follow-up action.

4. Substantive Change Requirements

Principles

Baylor University is committed to advancing academic excellence, creating knowledge and innovations through collaborations, offering a broad array of programs, and extending its reach to new locations. This commitment brings ongoing change and growth to the institution. Some changes are substantial enough to require reporting to and approval from its accrediting body, the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC). Specifically, SACSCOC articulates the institutional responsibility for reporting substantive changes:

“If an institution is non-compliant with Substantive Change Policy and Procedures or Standard 14.2 (Substantive change), its accreditation may be in jeopardy. Failure to secure approval, if required, of a substantive change involving programs or locations that qualify for title IV federal funding may place the institution in jeopardy with the U.S. Department of Education, including reimbursement of funds received related to an unreported substantive change.

SACSCOC defines substantive change as “a significant modification or expansion of the nature and scope of an accredited institution.” The reporting process is designed to ensure the quality and continuity of educational programs offered to students. Specific types of substantive change are listed in the procedures section of this policy.

Procedures

The table below lists the various types of substantive changes with the required documentation and deadlines for filing with SACSCOC. If an employee is involved in a change that may be impacted by this policy, the person should contact the Office of Institutional Effectiveness (IE) and utilize resources and forms on the [Baylor Substantive Change webpage](#) to communicate about the nature of the change. The most common types of substantive change include: (1) initiating a new educational program, (2) deactivating an educational program, (3) establishing a new off-campus instructional site, or (4) entering into a contractual agreement. Certain changes also involve fees payable to SACSCOC, as stated in their policy.

Type	SACSCOC Requirement	Documentation	Time Frame for reporting to SACSCOC
Academic Program Changes			
Change in Measure of Student Progress to Completion for Program (credit/clock hours).	Approval: Board-Exec	Prospectus	Jan. 1 for 7/1 to 12/31 implementation July 1 for 1/1 to 6/30 implementation
Competency-based Education by Direct Assessment: 25<50% of program credits	Notification	Letter	Jan. 1 for 7/1 to 12/31 implementation July 1 for 1/1 to 6/30 implementation
Competency-based Education by Direct Assessment: >50% of program credits	Approval: Board-Full; Committee Visit	Prospectus + Fee	March 15 (June Review) Sept. 1 (Dec. Review)
Cooperative Academic Arrangement with Accredited Title IV Entities delivering >50% of content or necessary for program completion	Notification	Letter + Signed Agreement	Jan. 1 for 7/1 to 12/31 implementation July 1 for 1/1 to 6/30 implementation

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Cooperative Academic Arrangement with Non-Title IV Entities delivering 25<50% of program content	Approval: Board-Exec*	Prospectus + Fee	Jan. 1 for 7/1 to 12/31 implementation July 1 for 1/1 to 6/30 implementation
Cooperative Academic Arrangement with Non-Title IV Entities who deliver <25% of program content	Notification*	Letter + Signed Agreement	Jan. 1 for 7/1 to 12/31 implementation July 1 for 1/1 to 6/30 implementation
Correspondence Education method for a program	Approval: Board-Exec	Letter + Fee	Jan. 1 for 7/1 to 12/31 implementation July 1 for 1/1 to 6/30 implementation
Dual Academic Award	Notification	Letter + Signed Agreement	Jan. 1 for 7/1 to 12/31 implementation July 1 for 1/1 to 6/30 implementation
Joint Academic Award with non-SACSCOC Institutions or Entities	Approval: Board-Exec	Prospectus + Fee	Jan. 1 for 7/1 to 12/31 implementation July 1 for 1/1 to 6/30 implementation
Joint Academic Award with SACSCOC Institutions	Notification	Letter + Signed Agreement	Jan. 1 for 7/1 to 12/31 implementation July 1 for 1/1 to 6/30 implementation
Method of Delivery – Adding new method of delivery to an existing program when on Substantive Change Restriction	Approval: Board-Exec*	Prospectus	Jan. 1 for 7/1 to 12/31 implementation July 1 for 1/1 to 6/30 implementation
Method of Delivery – Adding new method of delivery to an existing program.	Notification*	Letter	Jan. 1 for 7/1 to 12/31 implementation* July 1 for 1/1 to 6/30 implementation*
New Program – Adding a new program with >50% new content in the major or 25<50% if on SubChange Restriction	Approval: Board-Exec*	Prospectus + Fee	Jan. 1 for 7/1 to 12/31 implementation July 1 for 1/1 to 6/30 implementation
New Program – Adding a new program with 25<50% new content in the major	Notification*	Letter	Jan. 1 for 7/1 to 12/31 implementation July 1 for 1/1 to 6/30 implementation
Program Closure- (defined as date students are no longer admitted, not when instruction ends for current students)	Approval: Board-Exec	Teach-Out Plan	A teach-out plan should be submitted as soon as the decision is made to close
Program Designed for Prior Learning when on Substantive Change Restriction	Approval: Board-Exec*	Prospectus + Fee	Jan. 1 for 7/1 to 12/31 implementation July 1 for 1/1 to 6/30 implementation
Program Designed for Prior Learning- as a condition of student admission	Notification*	Letter	Jan. 1 for 7/1 to 12/31 implementation July 1 for 1/1 to 6/30 implementation
Program Length Change – >25% increase or decrease in credit hours	Approval: Board-Exec*	Prospectus + Fee	Jan. 1 for 7/1 to 12/31 implementation July 1 for 1/1 to 6/30 implementation
Program Re-open within 5 years of prior closure	Notification	Letter	Jan. 1 for 7/1 to 12/31 implementation July 1 for 1/1 to 6/30 implementation
Instructional Location Changes			
Off-campus Instructional Site Approval where >50% of a program is delivered (extensive or limited review types)	Approval: Board*; Com Visit Contingency	Prospectus + Fee	May differ based on review type. Contact Institutional Effectiveness Office
Off-campus Instructional Site where 25<50% of content for a program is delivered.	Notification	Letter	Jan. 1 for 7/1 to 12/31 implementation July 1 for 1/1 to 6/30 implementation
Off-campus Instructional Site Closure	Approval: Board-Exec	Teach-Out Plan	A teach-out plan should be submitted as soon as the decision is made to close
Off-campus Instructional Site Name or Address Change	Notification	Letter	Jan. 1 for 7/1 to 12/31 implementation July 1 for 1/1 to 6/30 implementation
Off-campus Instructional Site Notification	Notification	Letter	Jan. 1 for 7/1 to 12/31 implementation July 1 for 1/1 to 6/30 implementation
Off-campus Instructional Site Relocation (branch campus)	Approval: Board-Exec	Prospectus + Fee	Jan. 1 for 7/1 to 12/31 implementation July 1 for 1/1 to 6/30 implementation
Off-campus Instructional Site Relocation (not a branch campus)	Notification	Letter	Jan. 1 for 7/1 to 12/31 implementation July 1 for 1/1 to 6/30 implementation

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Off-campus Instructional Site Re-open	Notification	Letter + Statement	Jan. 1 for 7/1 to 12/31 implementation July 1 for 1/1 to 6/30 implementation
Institutional Changes			
Change in Measure of Student Progress to Completion for Institution (credit/clock hours)	Approval: Board-Exec	Prospectus + Fee	Jan. 1 for 7/1 to 12/31 implementation July 1 for 1/1 to 6/30 implementation
Competency-based Education by Course/Credit-based Approach – Institutional-level Approval	Approval: Board-Exec	Prospectus + Fee	Jan. 1 for 7/1 to 12/31 implementation July 1 for 1/1 to 6/30 implementation
Distance Education – Institutional-level Approval	Approval: Board-Exec	Prospectus + Fee	Jan. 1 for 7/1 to 12/31 implementation July 1 for 1/1 to 6/30 implementation
Governance Change	Approval: Board-Full; Committee Visit	Letter + Fee	Contact Institutional Effectiveness Office at least six months in advance.
Institutional Contingency Teach-out Plan	Approval: Board-Exec	Teach-Out Plan	Jan. 1 for 7/1 to 12/31 implementation July 1 for 1/1 to 6/30 implementation
Institution Closure	Approval: Board-Exec	Teach-Out Plan	The teach-out plan must be submitted as soon as possible after the decision
Institution, Program, or Location Acquisition	Approval: Board-Full; Committee Visit	Prospectus + Fee	Contact Institutional Effectiveness Office at least six months in advance.
Institution Relocation	Approval: Board-Exec	Prospectus + Fee	Jan. 1 for 7/1 to 12/31 implementation July 1 for 1/1 to 6/30 implementation
Level Change	Approval: Board-Full; Committee Visit	Application + Fee	March 15 (June Review) Sept. 1 (Dec. Review)
Merger / Consolidation	Notification; Approval: Board-Full; Committee Visit	Letter + Prospectus +Fee	Contact Institutional Effectiveness Office for more information.
Mission Change	Approval: Board-Exec	Prospectus + Fee	Jan. 1 for 7/1 to 12/31 implementation July 1 for 1/1 to 6/30 implementation
Ownership, Means of Control, or Legal Status Change	Notification; Approval: Board-Full; Committee Visit	Letter + Prospectus +Fee	Contact Institutional Effectiveness Office for more information.

KEY:

Board-Exec = The SACSCOC Board of Trustees Executive Committee needs to approve the change.

Board-Full = The SACSCOC Full Board of Trustees needs to approve the change.

Notification = SACSCOC requires only to be notified of the change.

* = Baylor may be subject to additional requirements. Consult with Institutional Effectiveness Office for more information.

7. Substantive Change Requirements