

**Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC)
Internal Notification and Substantive Change Policy**

PURPOSE: The purpose of this policy is to facilitate timely notification and submission of required documentation to the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) necessary for implementation of any substantive change to the institution as indicated within the SACSCOC *Substantive Change For Accredited Institutions of the Commission on Colleges Policy Statement*.

RATIONAL: According to SACSCOC “Member institutions are required to have a policy and procedure to ensure that all substantive changes are reported to the Commission in a timely fashion.” (SACSCOC, 2013).

POLICY STATEMENT: SACSCOC requires institutions to notify and/or receive approval prior to implementation of substantive changes. The Huston-Tillotson University Accreditation Liaison coordinates submission of such documentation to SACSCOC on behalf of Huston-Tillotson University. The Accreditation Liaison submits documentation in accordance with the policy and procedures outlined in the SACSCOC *Substantive Change For Accredited Institutions of the Commission on Colleges Policy Statement*. So as to ensure consistent timeliness of document submission, administrators must notify the Accreditation Liaison of forthcoming substantive changes according to the procedures that are outlined in this document.

DEFINITIONS:

Substantive change: According to SACSCOC, substantive change “is a significant modification or expansion of the nature and scope of an accredited institution” (2013).

According to SACSCOC, substantive changes include but are 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 change from clock hours to credit hours.
- 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.

For additional definitions, please see the *Glossary Terms* section of the most updated SACSCOC *Substantive Change For Accredited Institutions of the Commission on Colleges Policy Statement*.

POLICY PROCEDURE:

SACSCOC requires institutions to report substantive changes in various ways. Reporting formats include but are not limited to: a notification letter, modified prospectus, prospectus, application for level-change and other report types explicitly requested by the Commission. The Accreditation Liaison is responsible for submitting required document to SACSCOC. In order to submit a substantive change, administrators must first complete the Huston-Tillotson University Internal Substantive Change form within the timeframe indicated by the below substantive change internal processing categories.

Administrators can use the SACSCOC *Substantive Change For Accredited Institutions of the Commission on Colleges Policy Statement* as a guide to determine what substantive change procedure is appropriate. However, administrators should confirm with the Accreditation Liaison before a specific procedure is pursued.

Administrators should contact the Accreditation Liaison immediately should they have questions regarding whether a proposed change qualifies as a substantive change and requires notification to and/or approval from SACSCOC. Should a potential substantive change not be indicated within the SACSCOC *Substantive Change For Accredited Institutions of the Commission on Colleges Policy Statement*, the administrator should contact the Accreditation Liaison who will confer with the SACSCOC staff.

Substantive Change Internal Processing Categories:

(1) Substantive changes that require only notification to SACSCOC: University administrators must formally notify the internal accreditation liaison a minimum of four months prior to intended implementation of substantive changes that require only a notification letter to SACSCOC. Substantive changes cannot be implemented until the institution receives acceptance from SACSCOC of the notification letter.

(2) Substantive changes that require approval from SACSCOC: University administrators must formally notify the accreditation liaison a minimum of 9 months prior to intended implementation of substantive changes requiring SACSCOC approval. Substantive changes cannot be implemented until the institution receives approval from SACSCOC for the proposed substantive change. Such substantive changes will likely require a modified prospectus or a prospectus and may also included other requested documentation.

(3) Substantive changes that require approval and onsite review from SACSCOC: Substantive changes that require a lengthier review process, such as a level-change, will require

notification to the accreditation liaison a minimum of twelve to eighteen months before intended implementation. Substantive changes cannot be implemented until the institution receives approval for the proposed substantive change from SACSCOC.