Change Summary: *Substantive Change Policy and Procedures*

June 2025

Notes:

A. Changes enumerated below are in approximate order of occurrence in the redline
B. Page numbers reference the approximate location in the redline
C. Ignore formatting in the redline, viz., page breaks and page layouts; these will be addressed in the published version
D. This is a summary only, not an exhaustive list; all changes are in the redline
E. Internal and external hyperlinks may not work in the redline

---

1. No material policy revision; two minor edits in the policy section, but all material revisions are in procedures (pp. 3-4)
2. Removed all references to the *Seeking Accreditation at a Higher or Lower Degree Level* policy; all level change information revised and added to the substantive change policy to permit the separate outdated level change policy to be retired (pp. 4 and 96)
3. All existing level change language is deleted and replaced (a) to incorporate all level change information previously maintained in the separate level change policy and (b) to accommodate new substantive change types to more efficiently manage changes to level status and level authorizations (pp. 14, 26-39, 122-128, and 149-151)
4. Miscellaneous clarifications to Institutional Contingency Teach-out Plan (pp. 24-25)
5. For Program Re-open, clarified that changes to level status or level authorization cannot be accomplished be re-opening a previously closed program (p. 74)
6. New prospectus content in Appendix A for Level Authorization Addition (pp. 122-123)
7. New prospectus content in Appendix A for Level Change to a Higher Level (pp. 124-128)
8. For New Program - Approval prospectuses, (a) clarified the curriculum for the entire program must be submitted and (b) removed the requirement to submit a projected schedule of courses (p. 138)
9. Corrected an internal inconsistency regarding the criteria for a Program Length Change (p. 141)
10. Added two new terms to the Appendix B glossary: level authorization and level classification (pp. 149-150)
11. Updated level change items in the Appendix C quick reference table (p. 151)
12. Updated the Appendix D summary of recent changes (pp. 155-157)

■

Revised 05/20/2025

Substantive Change Policy and Procedures

Commented [KS1]: Edits for consideration by the SACSCOC Board of Trustees in June 2025. No material policy revisions; all material revisions in procedures. The major procedures revision is for level change, which is re-created concurrent with the proposed retiring of the separate level change policy.

Table of Contents

1. Policy 2
   - Overview 2
   - Compliance 3
   - Non-compliance 5
2. Procedures 6
   - General Requirements 6
   - Specific Requirements by Type of Substantive Change 14
     - Institutional Changes 14
     - Program Changes 47
     - Off-campus Instructional Site / Additional Location Changes 75
     - Other Changes 92
   - SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE RESTRICTION 93
   - Committee Visits 95
     - International Off-campus Instructional Sites 97
   - Fees and Expenses 98
     - Review Fee 98
     - Substantive Change Committee Visit Fee and Expenses 98
   - Unreported Substantive Change 99
   - Review Procedures 101
     - Staff Options 101
     - Options of the Committee on Compliance and Reports Following Review of the Prospectus or Application 101
     - Preparation for a Substantive Change Committee Visit 102
     - Options of the Committee on Compliance and Reports Following Review by a Substantive Change Committee 102
     - Teach-outs 102
3. Appendices 105
   - Appendix A: What to Submit for Approvals 105
     - Common Content 106
     - Institutional Changes 111
     - Program Changes 130
     - Off-campus Instructional Site / Additional Location Changes 142
     - Other Changes 147
   - Appendix B: Glossary 148
   - Appendix C: Quick Reference 151
   - Substantive Change Types 151
   - Conditions for SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE RESTRICTION and for an Institutional Contingency Teach-out Plan 154
   - Appendix D: Summary of Recent Changes 155

~~1. Policy ..... 2~~

~~**Overview** ..... 2~~
~~**Compliance** ..... 2~~
~~**Non-compliance** ..... 4~~
~~**2. Procedures** ..... 65~~
~~**General Requirements** ..... 65~~
~~**Specific Requirements by Type of Substantive Change** ..... 1413~~
~~Institutional Changes ..... 1413~~
~~Program Changes ..... 3736~~
~~Off-campus Instructional Site / Additional Location Changes ..... 6564~~
~~Other Changes ..... 8281~~
~~**Substantive Change Restriction** ..... 8382~~
~~**Committee Visits** ..... 8584~~
~~International Off-campus Instructional Sites ..... 8786~~
~~**Fees and Expenses** ..... 8887~~
~~Review Fee ..... 8887~~
~~Substantive Change Committee Visit Fee and Expenses ..... 8887~~
~~**Unreported Substantive Change** ..... 8988~~
~~**Review Procedures** ..... 9190~~
~~Staff Options ..... 9190~~
~~Options of the Committee on Compliance and Reports Following Review of the Prospectus or Application ..... 9190~~
~~Preparation for a Substantive Change Committee Visit ..... 9291~~
~~Options of the Committee on Compliance and Reports Following Review by a Substantive Change Committee ..... 9291~~
~~Teach-outs ..... 9291~~
~~**3. Appendices** ..... 9594~~
~~**Appendix A: What to Submit for Approvals** ..... 9594~~
~~Common Content ..... 9695~~
~~Institutional Changes ..... 101100~~
~~Program Changes ..... 113112~~
~~Off-campus Instructional Site / Additional Location Changes ..... 125124~~
~~Other Changes ..... 130129~~
~~**Appendix B: Glossary** ..... 131130~~
~~**Appendix C: Quick Reference** ..... 134133~~
~~**Substantive Change Types** ..... 134133~~
~~**Conditions for Substantive Change Restriction and for an Institutional Contingency Teach-out Plan** ..... 136135~~
~~**Appendix D: Summary of Recent Changes** ..... 137136~~

1. Policy

Overview

The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) substantive change policy and procedures assure the public that all aspects of an institution

continue to meet standards. It helps ensure substantive changes, if approved, do not hinder an institution's ability to continue meeting the SACSCOC *Principles of Accreditation*.

A substantive change is a significant modification or expansion of the nature and scope of an accredited institution. Substantive change includes high-impact, high-risk changes and changes that can impact the quality of educational programs and services.

SACSCOC accredits an entire institution. Accreditation extends to all programs and services of an institution wherever located and however delivered. SACSCOC does not accredit individual programs, locations, or portions of an institution. However, some new programs, locations, and other institutional changes are subject to notification and/or approval as defined in *Substantive Change Policy and Procedures*.

Compliance

Substantive changes, including those required by federal regulations, include:

- Substantially changing the established mission or objectives of an institution or its programs.
- Changing the legal status, form of control, or ownership of an institution.
- Changing the governance of an institution.
- Merging / consolidating two or more institutions or entities.
- Acquiring another institution or any program or location of another institution.
- Relocating an institution or an off-campus instructional site of an institution (including a branch campus).
- Offering courses or programs (i.e., credentials) at a higher or lower degree level than currently authorized.
- Adding graduate programs at an institution previously offering only undergraduate programs (including degrees, diplomas, certificates, and other for-credit credential).
- Changing the way an institution measures student progress, whether in clock hours or credit-hours; semesters, trimesters, or quarters; or time-based or non–time-based methods or measures.
- Adding a program that is a significant departure from the existing programs, or method of delivery, from those offered when the institution was last evaluated.
- Initiating programs by distance education or correspondence courses.
- Adding an additional method of delivery to a currently offered program.
- Entering into a cooperative academic arrangement.
- Entering into a written arrangement under 34 C.F.R. § 668.5 under which an institution or organization not certified to participate in the title IV Higher Education Act (HEA) programs offers less than 25% (notification) or 25-50% (approval) of one or more of the accredited institution's educational programs. An agreement offering more than 50% of one or more of an institution's programs is prohibited by federal regulation.

- Substantially increase or decreasing the number of clock hours or credit hours awarded or competencies demonstrated, or an increase in the level of credential awarded, for successful completion of one or more programs.
- Adding competency-based education programs.
- Adding each competency-based education program by direct assessment.
- Adding programs with completion pathways that recognize and accommodate a student's prior or existing knowledge or competency.
- Awarding dual or joint academic awards.
- Re-opening a previously closed program or off-campus instructional site.
- Adding a new off-campus instructional site/additional location including a branch campus.
- Adding a permanent location at a site at which an institution is conducting a teach-out program for students of another institution that has ceased operating before all students have completed their program of study.
- Closing an institution, a program, a method of delivery, an off-campus instructional site, or a program at an off-campus instructional site.
- Participating in the federal Prison Education Program providing Pell Grant access to confined or incarcerated students.

Other substantive change requirements, including those required by federal regulations, include:

- An institution is required to notify or secure SACSCOC approval prior to implementing a substantive change.
- An institution is responsible for always maintaining compliance with Standard 14.2 (Substantive change) of the *Principles of Accreditation* and with the *Substantive Change Policy and Procedures* and related policies, viz.,

    a. *Advertising and Student Recruitment* [PDF];
    b. *Credit Hours* [PDF];
    c. *Direct Assessment Competency-based Educational Programs* [PDF];
    d. *Distance and Correspondence Education* [PDF];
    e. *Dual Enrollment* [PDF]*;*
    f. *Merger/Consolidation, Acquisition, Change of Ownership, and Change of Governance, Control, Form, or Legal Status* [PDF] and;
    g. *Request for a Period of Noncompliance* [PDF]*.*~~*; and*~~
    ~~h. *Seeking Accreditation at a Higher or Lower Degree Level* [PDF].~~

- An institution is required to have a written substantive change policy and procedure. It must be approved through institutional processes and published in institutional documents accessible to those affected. The purpose of the institution's substantive change policy and procedure is to ensure all substantive changes are reported to SACSCOC in a timely fashion as required by *Substantive Change Policy and Procedures*. Institutions are responsible for implementing and enforcing their substantive change policy and procedure.
- An institution's fiscal and administrative capability to operate off-campus instructional sites is assessed when a new site is reviewed for approval and as part of reaffirmation and fifth-year interim reviews.

Commented [KS2]: All references to the separate *Seeking Accreditation at a Higher or Lower Degree Level* policy removed (1) concurrent with the level change revisions in the substantive change policy and (2) pending Board approval to retire the separate policy.

- A new off-campus instructional site is subject to a substantive change committee visit. A committee visit, when necessary, is authorized when a site is approved. The committee visit ensures the site has the personnel, facilities, and resources identified by an institution in its application or prospectus and ensures the quality of instructional and support services offered at the site.
- Different or additional requirements apply to an institution on SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE RESTRICTION. Restriction applies if an institution has been placed on Warning, Probation, or Probation for Good Cause over the prior three academic years, or if an institution is under provisional certification for participation in federal financial aid programs.
- An institution is required to submit an institutional contingency teach-out plan to SACSCOC within 30 days of notification if the institution is placed or continued on Probation or Probation for Good Cause, or if the institution meets conditions enumerated in the procedures section of this policy originating from the U.S. Department of Education or state authority.
- Numerous changes**:** Numerous substantive changes may accelerate an institution's next reaffirmation of accreditation. Accelerated reaffirmation may be triggered by, but not limited to,

    a. a significant change in the number of off-campus instructional sites including branch campuses,
    b. a significant change in the number of programs,
    c. a significant change in enrollment, and
    d. frequent mergers/consolidations or acquisitions.

Non-compliance

If an institution is non-compliant with *Substantive Change Policy and Procedures* or Standard 14.2 (Substantive change), its accreditation may be in jeopardy. An unreported substantive change may require a review of the institution's substantive change policy and procedures document by the SACSCOC Board of Trustees. Non-compliance subjects the institution to monitoring, sanction, or removal from membership. 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. For additional information, refer to *Unreported Substantive Change* in the procedures section of the *Substantive Change Policy and Procedures.*

2. Procedures

General Requirements

General requirements universally apply to most or all types of substantive change. They address obligations and processes by an institution and by SACSCOC. Specific requirements are addressed by substantive change type, organized by institutional changes, off-campus instructional site / additional location changes, and program changes.

- **Accreditation cycle:** Some types of substantive change affect an institution's reaffirmation of accreditation cycle:

    a. a merger/consolidation or change of ownership normally affects the reaffirmation cycle;
    b. a change of governance, means of control, or legal status or form may affect the reaffirmation cycle;
    c. acquiring a program(s) or site(s) from another institution normally will not affect the reaffirmation cycle;
    d. all other types of substantive change normally will not affect the reaffirmation cycle;
    e. numerous substantive changes may affect the reaffirmation cycle.

- **Appeal of substantive change decision:** A substantive change that is denied approval by the SACSCOC Board of Trustees is not appealable. All actions are final. An institution may revise and resubmit a prospectus or application without prejudice.

- **Appeal, litigation, and arbitration:** A SACSCOC accredited institution in the appeals process or in litigation or arbitration with SACSCOC is not eligible for substantive change.

- **Applicants and candidates:** Applicant and candidate institutions may not initiate substantive change. However, if required, an institutional contingency teach-out plan or an institution closure teach-out plan as described in policy applies to applicant and candidate institutions. The institutional contingency teach-out plan is addressed by candidate institutions in their Candidacy Report and not as a substantive change.

- **Approval date:** The approval date of a substantive change is the date of the SACSCOC Board of Trustee's action to approve. A substantive change is included in the scope of the institution's accreditation as of the approval date. Substantive changes are not approved retroactively.

- **Board review pathways:** Approval, or denial of approval, of a proposed substantive change is granted:

  a. by the full Board of Trustees, or
  b. by the Executive Council of the Board of Trustees on behalf of the full Board.

  The types of substantive changes reviewed by the full Board versus the Executive Council of the Board are defined in the section of the *Substantive Change Policy and Procedures* that addresses specific substantive changes. Exceptions are noted below.

  The full Board of Trustees meets biannually, typically in June and December. The Executive Council of the Board of Trustees meets every two weeks except December through mid-January. Published submission deadlines apply.

  Exceptions:

  There are exceptions, based on the conditions or characteristics of an institution, which require review and action by the full Board of Trustees rather than the Executive Council of the Board.

  Review by the full Board of Trustees is required if any of the following apply:

  a. An institution is on sanction (Warning, Probation, or Probation for Good Cause) at the time the substantive change prospectus or application is submitted.

     Exceptions:

     i. If an institution submitted a substantive change prospectus or application and is subsequently placed on sanction, the proposed change may be referred to the full Board of Trustees or may at the sole discretion of SACSCOC staff be reviewed by staff and referred to the Executive Council of the Board for action.
     ii. A substantive change
        1. to close a program, a site, a program at a site, or a method of delivery;
        2. for an implementation extension;
        3. for an institutional contingency teach-out plan; or
        4. for an institution closure

        may be reviewed by staff and referred to the Executive Council of the Board for action even if the institution is on sanction. The institution's sanction status is disclosed to the Executive Council at the time of review.

  b. An institution has recently been removed from sanction for non-compliance with Standards 13.1 (Financial resources), 13.2 (Financial documents), or 13.3 (Financial responsibility).

- **Deadlines**: Substantive change prospectus, application, and notification submission deadlines depend on (1) the type of SACSCOC Board of Trustees review, if required (see

also the Board review pathways explained below), and (2) the intended implementation date of the substantive change.

For a substantive change requiring approval by the full Board of Trustees (which meets biannually), to be implemented after the date of the Board meeting, the submission deadlines are

- **March 15** for review at the Board's biannual meeting in June of the same calendar year, and
- **September 1** for review at the Board's biannual meeting in December of the same calendar year.

For a substantive change requiring approval by the Executive Council of the Board of Trustees (which meets year-round), the submission deadlines are

- **January 1** for changes to be implemented July 1 through December 31 of the same calendar year, and
- **July 1** for changes to be implemented January 1 through June 30 of the subsequent calendar year.

For a substantive change requiring notification only, it can be submitted any time before implementation. Once the institution has submitted notification, it may implement before receiving a response from SACSCOC. If there are deficiencies or additional information needed about the notification, the institutional liaison will be contacted at the time of review for resolution and before action is taken. This applies to notifications only, not to approvals: changes requiring approval cannot be implemented until approved by the SACSCOC Board of Trustees.

For a substantive change to close a program, site, program at a site, or method of delivery, a teach-out plan should be submitted as soon as possible after the decision is made to close (i.e., stop admitting students).

- **Deferral:** A substantive change submission reviewed by staff may be deferred for additional information or explanation from the institution. If, after review and two deferrals, staff in its sole judgment does not have a sufficient basis to accept notification or recommend approval, then the notification, prospectus or application will be referred to the full Board of Trustees at its earliest possible regularly scheduled biannual meeting. The institution has a maximum of 180 days to respond to a deferral; otherwise, the submission is rejected. The institution may revise and resubmit at its discretion.

- **Disclosure:** At the time a substantive change is submitted, the institution is required to disclose if the institution is currently on provisional certification for participation in federal financial aid programs as defined in 34 C.F.R. § 668.13.

- **Implementation dates:** The implementation date is when an institution begins the material, public, non-reversable, or other significant actions of a substantive change. Examples

include changing an institution's measure of student progress to completion, admitting students to a new program, starting instruction at a new off-campus instructional site, and others.

The *intended* implementation date is an institution's forward-looking good faith estimate of when it will begin a substantive change. The intended implementation date is provided by the institution when a substantive change is submitted for review.

If a substantive change has already been implemented when an institution submits a substantive change, or if the institution implements a substantive change after submission but before receiving approval, then the change is considered an unreported substantive change and the institution is non-compliant with Standard 14.2 (substantive change). Refer to the *Non-compliance* section of this policy for additional guidance. If a substantive change has already been implemented at the time a notification or prospectus is submitted -- i.e., the institution is submitting a known unreported substantive change -- then the institution should report the actual implementation date as the intended implementation date in its submission.

Although SACSCOC may approve a substantive change after implementation as an unreported substantive change, approval is not retroactive to the actual implementation date. For mergers/consolidations and acquisitions and changes in ownership, implementation must occur within 30 days of the SACSCOC Board of Trustees approval.

- **Implementation time limit:** Approved substantive changes – except for those changes that must be implemented within 30 days as defined in policy – must be implemented within two years of the approval date. If an institution does not implement within two years of approval, then a new prospectus or application must be submitted and approved prior to implementation. An institution may request an implementation extension for cause, subject to SACSCOC Board of Trustees approval; see *Implementation Extension* in this policy for guidance.

- **Maintaining off-campus instructional site / additional locations accuracy and completeness:** An institution is obligated to maintain an accurate record with SACSCOC of off-campus instructional site names and addresses. A site name or address change is submitted to SACSCOC as a substantive change notification. Updating site names, addresses, or closures on the Institutional Summary Form submitted as part of reaffirmation or fifth-year interim reviews is insufficient; the institution is responsible for submitting a substantive change to maintain site records. If the institution identifies an error in a site record, the SACSCOC staff will work with the institution to resolve. (*Note*: an address change is different from a relocation; for additional information, see specific requirements by type of substantive change.)

- **Marketing, advertising, recruitment, and admissions:** Substantive changes are subject to SACSCOC's *Advertising and Student Recruitment* policy. Admission applications may be taken for substantive changes pending approval, but admission offers – including contingent offers – should not be made until the substantive change is approved by the SACSCOC Board of Trustees.

- **Non-enumerated changes:** SACSCOC reserves the right to consider an institutional change, or a group of changes, as constituting a substantive change even if not specifically enumerated in *Substantive Change Policy and Procedures*. SACSCOC may require an institution to submit materials related to the change(s) for review by staff and for possible review and action by the SACSCOC Board of Trustees. A substantive change committee visit may be authorized.

- **Notification vs. approval:** Upon favorable review of a proposed substantive change, either

  a. notification is accepted by staff, or
  b. approval is granted by the SACSCOC Board of Trustees.

  SACSCOC cannot accept notification or approve changes not identified and required in policy. Institutions should not submit changes that are not identified in policy as requiring notification or approval; no action will be taken.

- **Possible non-compliance:** If the review of a substantive change notification, prospectus, or application suggests material non-compliance with any of the *Principles of Accreditation* or SACSCOC policies, SACSCOC reserves the right to further review. An institution may be required to submit materials related to the possible non-compliance for review by staff and for possible review and action by the SACSCOC Board of Trustees. Further review may be warranted even if the related prospectus or application is withdrawn or if the substantive change is denied approval.

- **Right to reject:** Substantive change submissions for which an institution's documentation (a) does not match the substantive change type or (b) is materially insufficient may, at the sole discretion of staff, be rejected. An institution may revise its materials and submit the substantive change again.

- **Systems:** Because SACSCOC accredits institutions and does not accredit systems, a substantive change must be submitted by an institution. Systems or state coordinating boards cannot submit a substantive change on institutions' behalf. System coordination across institutions is encouraged where practicable, yet individual institutions are responsible for their substantive change submissions.

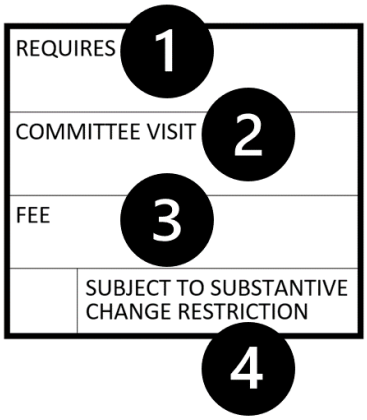
- **Submission authority:** A substantive change may be submitted by the institution's chief executive office or accreditation liaison only.

- **Submission process:** All substantive changes (unless otherwise directed) must be submitted through the Institutional Portal. For guidance, refer to the *Documents Submitted for SACSCOC Review* policy, viz., Appendix A (Electronic Submission of Documents). An Institutional Portal *User Guide* is available in the portal.

- **Withdrawal:** An institution may withdraw a substantive change application, prospectus, or notification at any point during the review process. If a substantive change has been approved or notification accepted, it cannot be withdrawn.

Using This Document

Each substantive change type described in the procedures – for institutional changes, for program changes, and for off-campus instructional site changes – is accompanied by a graphical summary of the principal requirements:



1. The change requires either
   - Notification,
   - Approval, or
   - Notification and Approval
2. A committee visit is either
   - Required,
   - Contingent on institutional characteristics, or
   - Not required
3. A fee to review the substantive change is either
   - Yes or
   - No

   (see the Fee and Expenses section of the procedure for amounts; committee visit fees and expenses are additional and separate)
4. The type of substantive change is subject to additional or different requirements if the institution is on SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE RESTRICTION, either
   - Yes or
   - No

For each substantive change type – e.g., Off-campus Instructional Site Approval by Extensive Review, New Program-Approval, Dual Academic Award, etc. – a

☑ *What to submit*

section identifies and explains the information that must be submitted by the institution.

For a substantive change requiring

Notification, the ☑*What to submit* information is listed with the substantive change type description and explanation.

For a substantive change requiring

Approval, the ☑*What to submit* information is provided either in

- Appendix A –What to Submit for Approvals – by substantive change type, or
- the separate policy that covers certain types of substantive change such as a level change, a governance change, and others; these are clearly noted under ☑ *What to Submit* for these types of substantive change.

This document is designed for use in digital and print formats.

• All Table of Contents items are hyperlinked to their location in the document, but they may not display in hyperlink format, i.e., in blue and underlined.

- Hyperlinks may direct you to
  - a location in this document,
  - another document, or
  - a website.
- The up arrow in the header on each page is a hyperlink to the top of the document.
- When accessing this document from the web, ensure the current version is accessed, i.e., not a saved (cached) copy. This is typically accomplished by clicking the browser's refresh button.
- When using a copy of the document – a digital or a printed copy – ensure the current version is used. Version dates are noted at the end of the document.

Monitor the substantive change webpage on the SACSCOC website for the most up-to-date information, reminders, and developments. Training and other materials available include

- a frequently asked questions (FAQs) webpage,
- an in-person workshops information webpage,
- announcements and updates,
- short how-to videos,
- substantive change webinars (live and on-demand),
- updates to this and other policies, and
- upcoming SACSCOC annual meeting sessions.

(End of General Requirements)

Specific Requirements by Type of Substantive Change

Institutional Changes

- Acquisition (p. 15~~15~~~~14~~)
- Change in Measure of Student Progress to Completion (p. 17~~17~~~~16~~)
- Competency-based Education by Course/Credit-based Approach – Institutional-level Approval (p. 18~~18~~~~17~~)
- Distance Education – Institutional-level Approval (p. 19~~19~~~~18~~)
- Governance Change (p. 20~~20~~~~19~~)
- Institution Closure (p. 21~~21~~~~20~~)
- Institution Relocation (p. 23~~23~~~~22~~)
- Institutional Contingency Teach-out Plan (p. 24~~24~~~~23~~)
- ~~Level Change (p. 26~~~~25~~)
- Level Classification and Level Authorization (p. XX)
  - Definitions and Guidelines (p. XX)
  - Level Authorization Addition (p. XX)
  - Level Authorization Removal (p. XX)
  - Level Change to a Higher Level (p. XX)
  - Level Change to a Lower Level (p. XX)
- Merger / Consolidation (p. 40~~30~~~~29~~)
- Mission Change (p. 41~~31~~~~30~~)
- Ownership, Means of Control, or Legal Status Change (p. 42~~32~~~~31~~)
- Prison Education Program – Institutional-level Approval (p. 43~~33~~~~32~~)

Commented [KS3]: All level change content has been re-written, including the addition of new level-related substantive change types

Acquisition

REQUIRES **Notification and Approval** **Full Board of Trustees**	
COMMITTEE VISIT **Required**	
FEE **Yes**	
No	SUBJECT TO SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE RESTRICTION

Acquisition is the sale, exchange, or transfer of a component of an institution's or entity's assets to a SACSCOC accredited institution. Following acquisition, the participating entities remain in operation as separate institutions or entities. Acquisition includes off-campus instructional sites, for-credit educational programs, or other tangible educational assets. Acquisition excludes assets unrelated to the core mission of the SACSCOC institution such as non-educational real estate and intangible property. Acquisition is independent of financial consideration; i.e., an acquisition may or may not involve the exchange of money or other assets between participating entities. Acquisition requires SACSCOC Board of Trustees approval.

Upon acceptance or approval of the prospectus, a Substantive Change Committee visit will be authorized to review the institution's ongoing compliance with the Principles of Accreditation following implementation of the acquisition. The implementation or effective date must occur within 30 days of the SACSCOC Board of Trustees approval of the acquisition. Acquisition normally does not affect the acquiring institution's reaffirmation cycle.

Refer to the *Merger/Consolidation, Acquisition, Change of Ownership, and Change of Governance, Control, Form, or Legal Status* [PDF] policy for additional guidance including the approval process, prospectus requirements, and submission deadlines.

In addition to a prospectus, an acquisition requires non-binding notification to SACSCOC at least six months prior to the SACSCOC Board of Trustees meeting at which the prospectus will be reviewed.

☑ *What to submit*

A notification: Submit a notification at least six months prior to Board of Trustees meeting date at which the prospectus will be reviewed 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. The signatures of the chief executive officers of all participating institutions or entities.

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.

■

Change in Measure of Student Progress to Completion

REQUIRES **Approval** Exec Council of the Board	
COMMITTEE VISIT **No**	
FEE **Yes**	
No	SUBJECT TO SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE RESTRICTION

A change in the way an institution measures students' progress to completion requires SACSCOC approval prior to implementation. This includes changes from or to

- semester, trimester, or quarter academic calendars;
- time-based (i.e., calendar-based) or non-time based (i.e., competency-based) measures; and
- clock hour-based or credit hour-based measures.

This substantive change addresses an *institutional-level* change across most or all of an institution's programs. However, a *program-level* change in the measure of student progress may require notification or approval: see also program-level substantive changes such as clock-credit hour conversion, method of delivery, and competency-based education programs.

A change in measure of student progress must demonstrate

- conversion equivalency from the current measure to the new measure, and
- compliance with the SACSCOC *Credit Hours* policy and the *Principles of Accreditation* Standards 9.2 (Program length), 9.7 (Program requirements), 10.1 (Academic policies), and 10.7 (Policies for awarding credit).

☑ *What to submit*

A prospectus: Submit a substantive change prospectus using the outline provided in Appendix A for a change in measure of student progress to completion (p. 111~~101~~~~100~~).

■

Competency-based Education by Course/Credit-based Approach – Institutional-level Approval

REQUIRES **Approval** Exec Council of the Board	
COMMITTEE VISIT **No**	
FEE **Yes**	
No	SUBJECT TO SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE RESTRICTION

In a competency-based education (CBE) program using the course/credit-based approach, demonstrating competencies is embedded in a traditional curriculum with courses completed, credits earned, and a credential awarded. Students typically enroll in an academic term and course credits are awarded at the end of the term by demonstrating mastery of the competencies associated with a course. Students may accelerate learning and demonstration of competencies. Transcripts record courses and grades, though the institution may opt to maintain a separate transcript of competencies.

An institution's *first* program in which 50% or more of the program may be earned through the course/credit-based approach to CBE requires SACSCOC approval prior to implementation. This approves both the program and approves the institution to offer additional course/credit-based CBE programs subject to additional approvals or notifications described below.

After the institution is approved to offer its first course/credit-based CBE program, additional programs in which 50% or more is earned through course/credit-based CBE are subject to

- new program approval if it is a significant departure from the institution's existing programs,
  —OR—
- new program notification if it is not a significant departure from the institution's existing programs,
  —OR—
- notification as an additional method of delivery for an existing program.

☑ *What to submit*

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 (p. 112~~102~~~~101~~).

■

Distance Education – Institutional-level Approval

REQUIRES **Approval** Exec Council of the Board	
COMMITTEE VISIT **No**	
FEE **Yes**	
No	SUBJECT TO SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE RESTRICTION

Distance education is a method of delivery in which 50% or more of instruction occurs when students and instructors are not in the same location. It includes synchronous (live or real-time) and asynchronous (not live or real-time) instruction.

An institution's *first* program in which 50% or more of the program may be earned by distance education requires SACSCOC approval prior to implementation. This approves both the program and approves the institution to offer distance education programs subject to additional approvals or notifications described below.

Exception: An institution offering less than 50% of a program by distance education may, at its discretion, submit a prospectus for Distance Education - Institutional-level Approval. This will allow the institution to comply, as needed, with U.S. Department of Education (USDE) federal student aid or other entity requirements for distance education approval to offer programs in which less than 50% of the content is delivered by distance education.

After the institution is approved to offer its first distance education program, additional programs in which 50% or more is earned through distance education are subject to

- new program approval if it is a significant departure from the institution's existing programs,
  —OR—
- new program notification if it is not a significant departure from the institution's existing programs,
  —OR—
- notification as an additional method of delivery for an existing program.

☑ *What to submit*

A prospectus: Submit a substantive change prospectus using the outline provided in Appendix A for distance education – institutional-level approval (p. 113~~103~~~~102~~).

■

Governance Change

REQUIRES **Notification and Approval** **Full Board of Trustees**	
COMMITTEE VISIT **Required**	
FEE **Yes**	
No	SUBJECT TO SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE RESTRICTION

An institutional governance change requires SACSCOC approval prior to implementation. A governance change may include significantly altering governing board bylaws, the board's scope of authority or responsibility, the number of board members, or how board members are selected. Only changing the composition of the board – i.e., replacing current board members with new members or other changes in accordance with established bylaws – does not usually constitute a governance change.

A substantive change committee visit is required and is authorized at the time of approval.

A governance change may affect the institution's reaffirmation cycle.

Refer to the *Merger/Consolidation, Acquisition, Change of Ownership, and Change of Governance, Control, Form, or Legal Status* [PDF] policy for additional guidance including the approval process, prospectus requirements, and submission deadlines.

In addition to a prospectus, an institutional governance change requires non-binding notification to SACSCOC at least six months prior to the SACSCOC Board of Trustees meeting at which the prospectus will be reviewed.

☑ *What to submit*

A notification: Submit a notification at least six months prior to Board of Trustees meeting date at which the prospectus will be reviewed 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. The signatures of the chief executive officers of all participating institutions or entities.

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.

■

Institution Closure

REQUIRES **Approval** Exec Council of the Board	
COMMITTEE VISIT **No**	
FEE **No**	
No	SUBJECT TO SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE RESTRICTION

An institution ending all instruction requires an institution closure teach-out plan subject to SACSCOC Board of Trustees approval. Unlike an institutional contingency teach-out plan – which is a *precautionary* plan – an institution closure addresses *imminent* closure or closure expected with reasonable certainty. The teach-out plan must be submitted as soon as possible after closure becomes known or expected.

The teach-out plan details the institution's process for orderly closure with primary emphasis on assisting students complete their programs of study with minimal disruption and additional costs. Institutions may teach-out their own programs, enter into teach-out agreements with other institutions, or both. For an institution with a gradual or phased teach-out plan, the teach-out period may extend several years.

The teach-out institution(s) – i.e., the institution(s) accepting displaced students from the closing institution – may request an exception to Standard 9.4 (institutional credits for an undergraduate degree) and/or Standard 9.5 (institutional credits for a graduate or professional degree) to accommodate students near the end of their program of study. Refer to the *Request for a Period of Noncompliance* policy for guidance. The closing institution should ensure the teach-out institution(s) are aware of this option and may wish to include it in any teach-out agreement(s) executed pursuant to the closure.

The teach-out plans

- provide reasonable completion options for all students in all programs, independent of how near or far the students are from completion,
- explain how the institution will provide for students' and former students' access to academic transcripts and other verification of academic credentials,
- identify the permanent repositor or trustee of student academic and financial aid records,
- describe the process and expected timeline for the disposition of assets,
- address any other provision identified by SACSCOC staff as essential to the successful closure of the institution based on the institution's particular situation and in the interest of the affected students and former students.

☑ *What to submit*

A teach-out plan: Submit a teach-out plan using the outline provided in Appendix A for an institution closure (p. 114~~104~~~~103~~).

■

Institution Relocation

REQUIRES **Approval** **Exec Council of the Board**	
COMMITTEE VISIT **No**	
FEE **Yes**	
No	SUBJECT TO SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE RESTRICTION

An institution relocation requires SACSCOC approval prior to implementation. The prospectus should explain the institution's plan and timeline, assurance of continuous operation, assurance that instruction and student support services are not materially interrupted or hindered, and assurance of adequate financial resources and planning to support the relocation and continued operation of the institution. The prospectus must demonstrate the new location maintains the institution's compliance with Standards 13.7 *(Physical resources)* and 13.8 *(Institutional environment)*. The prospectus must demonstrate the relocation will not place the institution in jeopardy of non-compliance with the *Principles of Accreditation*.

☑ *What to submit*

A prospectus: Submit a substantive change prospectus using the outline provided in Appendix A for an institution relocation (p. 117~~107106~~).

■

Institutional Contingency Teach-out Plan

Commented [KS4]: Various clarifications and formatting (headings, bullets, etc.)

REQUIRES **Approval** Exec Council of the Board	
COMMITTEE VISIT **No**	
FEE **No**	
No	SUBJECT TO SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE RESTRICTION

A contingency teach-out plan is created in due diligence as a precaution rather than as an imminent closure plan. Should closure become necessary, the contingency teach-out plan becomes the institution closure plan, subject to revisions as warranted. The objective of a contingency teach-out plan is assurance of adequate institutional planning and SACSCOC concurrence for the benefit of students, faculty, and staff well in advance of immediate need. The contingency teach-out plan must detail, for each institutional program, how the institution will provide options for students to complete their programs of study with minimal disruption and additional costs, including identification of comparable programs and institutions. Teach-out agreements may be included.

Conditions

An institutional contingency teach-out plan must be submitted and approved by the SACSCOC Board of Trustees if any of the following conditions occur:

1. the institution is placed or continued on probation or probation for good cause by SACSCOC~~,~~;
2. SACSCOC acts to end the institution's accreditation~~,~~;
3. the institution is on provisional certification for federal financial aid by U.S. Department of Education (USDE) —AND— the institution has been directed by USDE to submit a teach-out plan as a condition of participation~~,~~;
4. the institution is on reimbursement for federal financial aid by USDE~~,~~;
5. the institution is on heightened cash monitoring for federal financial aid by USDE~~,~~;
6. the institution is the subject of USDE emergency action or an action to limit, suspend, or terminate the institution's participation in federal financial aid~~,~~; *or*
7. the institution's state authorization is revoked.

Exceptions for institutional credits for a degree

The teach-out institution(s) – i.e., the institution(s) accepting displaced students from the closing institution – may request an exception to Standard 9.4 (institutional credits for an undergraduate degree) and/or Standard 9.5 (institutional credits for a graduate or professional degree) to accommodate students near the end of their program of study. Refer to the *Request for a Period of Noncompliance* policy for guidance. The closing institution should ensure the teach-out institution(s) are aware of this option and may wish

to include it in any teach-out agreement(s) executed pursuant to the closure. *Note*: Requests for a period of noncompliance, if any, are made by the teach-out institutions(s), i.e., the receiving institution(s) to which students will transfer.

☑ *What to submit*

A teach-out plan: Submit a teach-out plan using the outline provided in Appendix A for an institutional contingency teach-out plan (p. 118~~108~~~~107~~).

■

Level Change

REQUIRES **Approval** **Full Board of Trustees**	
COMMITTEE VISIT **Required**	
FEE **Yes**	
No	SUBJECT TO SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE RESTRICTION

Initiating coursework or a program – including a certificate, diploma, degree, or other generally recognized credit-bearing program – at a different level than previously approved or authorized by SACSCOC requires a level change application and SACSCOC approval prior to implementation.

SACSCOC classifies institutions according to the highest degree level offered by the institution. The classifications are:

Level	Highest degree offered
I	Associate
II	Baccalaureate
III	Master's
IV	Master's and specialist
V	Three or fewer doctorates
VI	Four or more doctorates

Refer to the *Seeking Accreditation at a Higher or Lower Degree Level* [PDF] policy for additional guidance including the approval process, application, and submission deadlines.

The highest degree level offered by the institution does not automatically include authorization of the institution to offer coursework or program at all lower levels; i.e., the institution's highest degree level is not inclusive of authority to offer courses or programs at all lower degree levels. For example, a Level V institution is not automatically authorized to offer undergraduate coursework or programs; a Level II institution is not automatically authorized to offer the associate degree. Authorization to offer coursework or programs at a given level is explicitly approved by the SACSCOC Board of Trustees. An institution unsure of its coursework or program level authorizations should contact its SACSCOC staff representative; this information is publicly disclosed for all institutions on the SACSCOC website.

Committee Visit

A substantive change committee visit is required for a level change and is authorized at the time of approval except for those noted under the exceptions section herein.

Additional Program at the Newly Approved Level

Following the approval of a level change by the SACSCOC Board of Trustees, the institution may not initiate an additional program(s) at the newly approved level until after

Commented [KS5]: The separate level change policy -- "Seeking Accreditation at a Higher or Lower Degree Level" -- will be retired (pending Board approval) concurrent the proposed level change revisions to the substantive change policy contained herein. There is no on-going rationale for level change requirements to be contained in a separate policy. Because of the extensive changes, the current level change content in this policy is deleted in total and re-written with proposed new and revised language content.

~~the SACSCOC Board of Trustees takes positive action on the institution's continued accreditation following review of the report of the substantive change committee visit authorized at the time of approval.~~

☑ ~~*What to submit*~~

~~A level change application: Submit a level change application using the outline provided in *Seeking Accreditation at a Higher or Lower Degree Level* [PDF].~~

~~***Exceptions:***~~

~~**Embedded associate degree**~~

~~**…that is not a significant departure:** A baccalaureate degree granting institution may combine already offered lower division coursework into an associate degree program. This does not constitute a significant departure because the institution already offers the courses comprising the new degree program. In this case, a level change application is still required to authorize the institution to offer the associate degree; however, the application may be reviewed by SACSCOC staff and referred to the Executive Committee of the SACSCOC Board of Trustees for action.~~

~~REQUIRES~~ ~~**Approval**~~ ~~**Exec Council of the Board**~~	
~~COMMITTEE VISIT~~ ~~**No**~~	
~~FEE~~ ~~**Yes**~~	
~~**No**~~	~~SUBJECT TO SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE RESTRICTION~~

☑ ~~*What to submit*~~

~~A level change application: Submit a level change application for an embedded associate degree that is not a significant departure using the outline provided in *Seeking Accreditation at a Higher or Lower Degree Level* [PDF].~~

~~**…that is a significant departure:** A baccalaureate degree granting institution seeking authorization to offer an associate degree program with course coursework significantly different from current lower division coursework – i.e., a significant departure – must submit a level change application to be reviewed for action by the full~~

~~REQUIRES~~ ~~**Approval**~~ ~~**Full Board of Trustees**~~	
~~COMMITTEE VISIT~~ ~~**No**~~	
~~FEE~~ ~~**Yes**~~	
~~**No**~~	~~SUBJECT TO SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE RESTRICTION~~

~~SACSCOC Board of Trustees at a regularly scheduled biannual meeting, usually in June and December.~~

☑ ~~*What to submit*~~

~~A level change application: Submit a level change application for an embedded associate degree that is a significant departure using the outline provided in *Seeking Accreditation at a Higher or Lower Degree Level* [PDF].~~

~~For either type of level change for an embedded associate degree program, a substantive change committee visit is normally not authorized but is at the discretion of the Board of Trustees.~~

~~Embedded Specialist degree:~~

~~Although rare, an institution already approved for a Doctor of Education (Ed.D.) degree program might not have concurrently sought approval to offer the Education Specialist (Ed.S.) degree program. If an institution with an approved Ed.D. program subsequently chooses to combine existing graduate-level coursework already being offered as part of an Ed.D. program into a separate and coherent Ed.S. program curriculum, review of a level change application to authorize awarding the Ed.S. degree may be reviewed by SACSCOC staff and referred to the Executive Committee of the SACSCOC Board of Trustees for action. A substantive change committee visit is normally not authorized but is at the discretion of the Board of Trustees.~~

~~REQUIRES~~ **~~Approval~~** **~~Exec Council of the Board~~**	
~~COMMITTEE VISIT~~ **~~No~~**	
~~FEE~~ **~~Yes~~**	
~~No~~	~~SUBJECT TO SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE RESTRICTION~~

☑ ~~*What to submit*~~

~~A level change application: Submit a level change application for an embedded specialist degree using the outline provided in *Seeking Accreditation at a Higher or Lower Degree Level* [PDF].~~

~~Level V to Level VI:~~

~~An institution moving from Level V to Level VI does not require a level change application or level change approval. An institution moves from Level V to Level VI concurrent with, and consequent to, implementation of the institution's fourth doctoral degree program. While the fourth doctorate is subject to approval as a new program as a significant departure from existing programs, a level change application to move from Level V to Level VI is not required. The institution should request reclassification to Level VI after the fourth doctoral program enrolls its first students. A substantive change committee visit~~

~~is normally not authorized when moving from Level V to Level VI, but a visit is at the discretion of the Board of Trustees.~~

☑ ~~*What to submit*~~

~~A letter to the SACSCOC president: Submit a letter to the president of SACSCOC to include for the fourth doctoral program~~

- ~~the program's name and intended implementation date,~~
- ~~certification that the first students have enrolled in the program,~~
- ~~evidence the program was approved by the SACSCOC Board of Trustees~~
  ~~OR~~
  ~~an explanation of how the institution determined the program was not a significant departure and thus did not require SACSCOC approval, and~~
- ~~a request to reclassify to a Level VI institution.~~

Level Classification and Level Authorization Definitions and Guidelines

(*See also Level Authorization Addition, Level Authorization Removal, Level Change to a Higher Level, and Level Change to a Lower Level*)

Definitions

- Level classification: An institutional status indicating the highest level for which an institution is approved to offer instruction and credentials.

  Credentials include degrees and non-degree diplomas, certificates, and other generally recognized for-credit credentials.

  Levels and their associated instruction and degree credentials, from lowest to highest, are:

  I Associate;
  II Baccalaureate;
  III Masters;
  IV Specialist;
  V Doctoral, offering one to three doctoral programs; and
  VI Doctoral, offering four or more doctoral programs.

  An institution's level classification is denoted by the corresponding Roman numeral defined above.

  Example: A Level II institution is approved to offer instruction and credentials at the baccalaureate level; it is not approved to offer instruction or credentials at the masters, specialist, or doctoral levels.

  Non-degree credentials may be offered at any instructional level; e.g., an associate-level (freshman- and sophomore-level coursework) diploma, a masters-level certificate, etc. For further guidance, refer to the SACSCOC *Non-degree Credentials Position Statement*.

  An institution's level classification is not automatically inclusive of offering instruction and credentials at lower levels.

  Example: A Level III institution is approved to offer instruction and credentials at the masters level; this does not automatically include authorization to offer instruction and credentials at the associate or baccalaureate levels. (See also level authorization.)

- Level Authorization: SACSCOC authorization for an institution to offer instruction and credentials at a level lower than the highest level for which an institution is approved to offer instruction and credentials.

An institution's level classification is not automatically inclusive of level authorization at lower levels.

Example: A Level VI institution is approved to offer instruction and credentials at the doctoral level. To offer programs at the associate, baccalaureate, specialist, or masters level, the institution must have level authorization to offer instruction and programs at each of the lower levels for which it awards a credential(s).

Guidelines

1. An institution's current level classification and level authorization(s)

   - can be verified in the institutional portal, and
   - are publicly displayed on the SACSCOC website's institutional profile; after searching and selecting an institution, see
     - *Accreditation Information | Degree Level* for level classification, and
     - *General Information | Approved to Offer* for level authorization(s).

2. Changing an institution's level classification or level authorization(s) is accomplished through one of four substantive change types, each addressed in the substantive change policy and procedures:

   - Level Authorization Addition
   - Level Authorization Removal
   - Level Change to a Higher Level
   - Level Change to a Lower Level

3. An institution secures approval prior to implementation for a

   - Level Authorization Addition and for a
   - Level Change to a Higher Level.

4. An institution submits notification for a

   - Level Authorization Removal and for a
   - Level Change to a Lower Level

   after all instruction has ended for all programs at a given level.

5. A Level Authorization Addition or a Level Change to a Higher Level cannot be accomplished by re-opening a program previously approved for closure.

■

Level Authorization Addition

(*See also Level Classification and Level Authorization Definitions and Guidelines*)

REQUIRES **Approval** **Exec Council of the Board**	
COMMITTEE VISIT **No**	
FEE **Yes**	
No	SUBJECT TO SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE RESTRICTION

Read the *Level Classification and Level Authorization Definitions and Guidelines* section of the procedures. It provides context for this substantive change type and guidance on confirming the institution's current level authorization(s) before submitting a substantive change.

Level authorization is required for an institution to offer instruction and credentials at a level lower than the highest level for which the institution is approved and for which the institution is not currently authorized.

After an institution is authorized to offer instruction and credentials at a level, no further authorization is required to add additional instruction or credentials at that level. However, all other substantive change requirements apply without exception to subsequent programs at that level, viz., New Program Approval and New Program Notification if the criteria for those substantive changes are met.

The institution, through a prospectus, demonstrates its institutional capacity, financial resources, faculty qualifications and sufficiency, and adequate planning to support offering instruction and credentials at the proposed level. Each program to be offered at the proposed level within the first year of implementation is addressed in the prospectus. A level authorization addition requires approval prior to implementation.

Although a substantive change committee visit is not required for a level authorization addition, a committee visit may be authorized at the SACSCOC Board of Trustees' discretion.

An institution may request one level authorization addition only in a single submission. Requests for multiple level authorization additions must be separately submitted but can be submitted concurrently.

☑ *What to submit*

A prospectus: Submit a substantive change prospectus using the outline provided in Appendix A for a level authorization addition (p. XXX).

■

Level Authorization Removal

(*See also Level Classification and Level Authorization Definitions and Guidelines*)

REQUIRES **Notification**	
COMMITTEE VISIT **No**	
FEE **No**	
No	SUBJECT TO SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE RESTRICTION

Read the *Level Classification and Level Authorization Definitions and Guidelines* section of the procedures. It provides context for this substantive change type.

After an institution ends all instruction for all programs at an instructional or credential level, it is obligated to update its level classification or level authorization(s) in SACSCOC's records.

A Level Authorization Removal notification is required after an institution ends *all* instruction and programs at a given instructional or credential level yet continues to offer instruction or credentials at its current level classification, i.e., the highest level for which it is approved to offer instruction or credentials. The institution's level classification is unchanged, yet its authorization to offer instruction or credentials at the level for which all instruction and programs have ended is removed.

> Example A: A Level III institution is approved to offer master's degrees and is authorized to offer baccalaureate degrees. The institution ceased offering all instruction and all programs at the baccalaureate degree level. The institution is obligated to submit a Level Authorization Removal notification. The institution will remain a Level III institution, but it is no longer authorized to offer baccalaureate-level instruction or credentials.
>
> Example B: A Level VI institution is approved to offer doctoral degrees and is authorized to offer associate, baccalaureate, and master's degrees. The institution ceased offering all instruction and programs at the associate level. The institution is obligated to submit a Level Authorization Removal notification. The institution will remain a Level VI institution authorized to offer baccalaureate, master's, and doctoral degrees, but it is no longer authorized to offer associate-level degrees or credentials.

Level Authorization Removal vs. Level Change to a Lower Level: If an institution ends *all* instruction and programs at its current level classification, i.e., the highest level for which it is approved to offer instruction or credentials, then a Level Change to a Lower Level notification is required as detailed in the substantive change policy and procedures; a Level Authorization Removal is not required.

Notes:

1. A Level Authorization Removal notification is submitted after the institution has secured Program Closure approval(s) and after all instruction and programs have ended. Program Closures (teach-outs) cannot be bundled and submitted with a Level Authorization Removal notification (nor vice versa).

2. After a Level Authorization Removal notification has been accepted,
   a. adding or reestablishing authorization(s) at that level requires Level Authorization Addition approval, and
   b. A Level Authorization Addition or a Level Change to a Higher Level cannot be accomplished by re-opening a program previously approved for closure.
3. An institution's level classification and level authorization(s) are publicly available information and are disclosed on the SACSCOC website.
4. The institution is reminded to update all occurrences of its statement for accredited institutions to accurately represent its status with SACSCOC to the public. Refer to the *Institutional Obligations for Public Disclosure* policy for guidance.

☑ *What to submit*

1. Provide the instruction or credential level(s) for which the institution seeks removal of authorization: associate, baccalaureate, master's, or specialist.
   Note: Removing more than one level can be included in a single submission.
2. Provide the
   a. final program name(s) -- i.e., credential plus discipline (e.g., Certificate in Gerontology, Bachelor of Science in Chemistry, etc.) -- at the level(s) for which the institution seeks authorization removal,
   b. date of last instruction or date final credential was awarded, and
   c. the Case ID(s) of the Program Closure approval(s) for the final program(s).

■

Level Change to a Higher Level

(*See also Level Classification and Level Authorization Definitions and Guidelines*)
(For Level V to Level VI level change, see the special instructions at the end of this section)

REQUIRES **Approval** Full Board of Trustees	
COMMITTEE VISIT **Required**	
FEE **Yes**	
No	SUBJECT TO SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE RESTRICTION

Read the *Level Classification and Level Authorization Definitions and Guidelines* section of the procedures. It provides context for this substantive change type.

If an institution intends to offer instruction or credentials at a level higher than that for which it is currently approved, then approval of a level change to a higher level is required.

A level change to a higher level represents a significant change in the scope of an institution that has far-reaching implications including new and different institutional effectiveness obligations, resources (including faculty sufficiency and qualifications, financial, and library and learning/information), services (information technology, recruiting and admission, student support, e.g.) and more. The SACSCOC Board of Trustees evaluates an institution's level change prospectus to ensure it

a) demonstrates adequate planning, resources, and readiness to implement the change relative to the criteria articulated in this policy and
b) reasonably demonstrates that implementation of the level change will not place the institution in material jeopardy of being unable to maintain compliance with the *Principles of Accreditation* or SACSCOC's policies for accredited institutions.

Approval of a level change to a higher level includes approval of the first program or programs to be offered at the higher level. As such, the prospectus must separately address new program approval requirements for *each* program at the proposed higher level to be offered in the first year of implementation after approval. Therefore, the prospectus may include more than one program; however, the institution should be aware that the SACSCOC Board of Trustees may deny approval of a level change if any one program (or more) included in the prospectus does not meet all new program and level change requirements.

An institution's new level classification is effective as of the date of the Board of Trustees approval of the level change to a higher level. The institution is reminded to update all occurrences of its statement for accredited institutions to accurately represent its status with SACSCOC to the public. Refer to the *Institutional Obligations for Public Disclosure* policy for guidance.

A substantive change committee visit is required after the implementation of a level change to a higher level. The committee visit is authorized by the SACSCOC Board of Trustees at the time the level change is approved. The visit generally occurs no more than six months after implementation of the new program(s) at the newly-approved level.

The committee is charged with determining the institution's on-going compliance with select standards following implementation of program(s) at the new level.

Important: **An institution may not implement additional programs at the newly-approved level classification until after the SACSCOC Board of Trustees takes positive action on the report of the level change substantive change committee visit at a regularly scheduled meeting of the Board (typically in June and December).**

If an institution does not implement a level change within two years of approval, commencing on the date of the Board's action to approve, then the institution must submit a request in writing to the SACSCOC president to rescind the level change approval and rescind the authorization of the substantive change committee visit. Upon rescission, the institution's level classification will revert to its previous status or the current highest level for which it offers instruction and credentials. An institution may request an implementation extension for cause, subject to SACSCOC Board of Trustees approval; see Implementation Extension in the substantive change policy and procedures and contact a substantive change staff member for guidance if needed.

An institution may not offer coursework at a level higher than its current level classification in anticipation of securing level change approval.

The institution is reminded to update all occurrences of its statement for accredited institutions to accurately represent its status with SACSCOC to the public. Refer to the *Institutional Obligations for Public Disclosure* policy for guidance.

Special Instructions for Level Change from Level V to Level VI

A level change from Level V (offering one to three doctoral programs) to Level VI (offering four or more doctoral programs) does not require a level change prospectus, Board of Trustees review and approval, or a committee visit. Because the distinction between Level V and Level VI is solely the number of doctoral programs currently offered by an institution, a level change from Level V to Level VI is an administrative change only and is managed by the substantive change staff. After the institution receives SACSCOC new program approval, if necessary, and implements its fourth doctoral program (i.e., after students have matriculated), the institution may contact the substantive change office or the SACSCOC vice president assigned to the institution for guidance. The change will be documented in SACSCOC records, the institution will receive written confirmation, and the public SACSCOC website will reflect the institution's updated level.

Note: If an institution closes a doctoral program or programs such that it offers one to three doctoral programs —OR— if an institution closes all doctoral programs, then the institution is obligated to submit a Level Change to a Lower Level substantive change notification.

☑ *What to submit*

A prospectus: Submit a substantive change prospectus using the outline provided in Appendix A for a level change to a higher level (p. XXX).

■

Level Change to a Lower Level

(*See also Level Classification and Level Authorization Definitions and Guidelines*)

REQUIRES **Notification**	
COMMITTEE VISIT **No**	
FEE **No**	
No	SUBJECT TO SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE RESTRICTION

Read the *Level Classification and Level Authorization Definitions and Guidelines* section of the procedures. It provides context for this substantive change type.

After an institution ends all instruction for all programs at an instructional or credential level, it is obligated to update its level classification or level authorization(s) in SACSCOC's records.

A Level Change to a Lower Level notification is required after an institution ends *all* instruction and programs at its current level classification, i.e., the highest level for which it is approved to offer instruction or credentials. The institution's level classification is lowered to the highest level at which it currently offers instruction or credentials. Its authorization to offer instruction or credentials at levels lower than its level classification is unchanged.

> Example: A Level III institution is approved to offer master's degrees and is authorized to offer associate and baccalaureate degrees. The institution ceased offering all instruction and all programs at the master's level. The institution is obligated to submit a Level Change to a Lower Level notification. The institution will become a Level II institution, and its authorization to offer associate- and baccalaureate-level instruction or credentials is unchanged.

Level Change to a Lower Level vs. Level Authorization Removal: If an institution ends *all* instruction and programs at a given instructional or credential level yet continues to offer instruction or credentials at its current level classification, i.e., the highest level for which it is approved to offer instruction or credential, then a Level Authorization Removal notification is required as detailed in the substantive change policy and procedures; a Level Change to a Lower Level is not required.

Notes:

1. A Level Change to a Lower Level notification is submitted after the institution has secured Program Closure approval(s) and after all instruction and programs have ended. Program Closures (teach-outs) cannot be bundled and submitted with a Level Change to a Lower Level notification (nor vice versa).
2. After a Level Change to a Lower Level notification has been accepted,
   a. adding or reestablishing approval at that level requires Level Change to a Higher Level approval, and
   b. A Level Change to a Higher Level or a Level Authorization Addition cannot be accomplished by re-opening a program previously approved for closure.
3. An institution's level classification and level authorization(s) are publicly available information and are disclosed on the SACSCOC website.

4. The institution is reminded to update all occurrences of its statement for accredited institutions to accurately represent its status with SACSCOC to the public. Refer to the *Institutional Obligations for Public Disclosure* policy for guidance.

☑ *What to submit*

1. Provide the highest instruction or credential level of the program(s) offered by the institution to current students: associate, baccalaureate, master's, specialist, or doctoral offering one to three doctoral programs; i.e., identify the level classification to which the institution is moving.
2. Provide the
    a. final program name(s) -- i.e., credential plus discipline (e.g., Certificate in Gerontology, Bachelor of Science in Chemistry, etc.) -- at the institution's current level classification,
    b. date of last instruction or date final credential was awarded, and
    c. the Case ID(s) of the Program Closure approval(s) for the final program(s).

■

Merger / Consolidation

REQUIRES **Notification and Approval** **Full Board of Trustees**
COMMITTEE VISIT **Required**
FEE **Yes**
No SUBJECT TO SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE RESTRICTION

Merger/consolidation is the sale, exchange, or transfer of all assets of at least one institution or entity to a SACSCOC accredited institution. Following a merger/consolidation, only one institution remains in operation as a separate institution or entity. Merger/consolidation is independent of financial consideration; i.e., a merger/consolidation may or may not involve the exchange of money between participating entities. A Substantive Change Committee visit is required and is authorized upon acceptance or approval of the prospectus. The Committee will review the institution's ongoing compliance with the *Principles of Accreditation* following implementation of the merger/consolidation. The implementation or effective date must occur within 30 days of the SACSCOC Board of Trustees approval of the merger/consolidation. A merger/consolidation usually affects the resulting institution's reaffirmation cycle.

Refer to the *Merger/Consolidation, Acquisition, Change of Ownership, and Change of Governance, Control, Form, or Legal Status* [PDF] policy for additional guidance including the approval process, prospectus requirements, and submission deadlines.

In addition to a prospectus, a merger/consolidation requires non-binding notification to SACSCOC at least six months prior to the SACSCOC Board of Trustees meeting at which the prospectus will be reviewed.

☑ *What to submit*

A notification: Submit a notification at least six months prior to Board of Trustees meeting date at which the prospectus will be reviewed 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. The signatures of the chief executive officers of all participating institutions or entities.

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

REQUIRES **Approval** **Exec Council of the Board**	
COMMITTEE VISIT **No**	
FEE **Yes**	
No	SUBJECT TO SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE RESTRICTION

A significant change in the established mission of an institution requires SACSCOC approval prior to implementation. A mission change fundamentally alters the character of an institution and its portfolio of academic programs or other mission-driven activities.

- An editorial change or re-wording of a mission statement that does not reflect a material change in mission is not a substantive change. This type of change does not require approval and should not be reported to SACSCOC.
- A mission change may be implicitly embedded or concurrent with other another type of substantive change requiring SACSCOC approval. Examples are a level change, a merger/consolidation, or establishing a program or portfolio of programs that changes the distinctiveness of an institution. This type of mission change typically does not require separate review and approval but should be clear in the prospectus or application for the other type of substantive change.

☑ *What to submit*

A prospectus: Submit a substantive change prospectus using the outline provided in Appendix A for a mission change (p. 121~~111110~~).

■

Ownership, Means of Control, or Legal Status Change

REQUIRES **Notification and Approval** **Full Board of Trustees**
COMMITTEE VISIT **Required**
FEE **Yes**
No SUBJECT TO SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE RESTRICTION

An institutional change of ownership, change of institutional means of control, or change of institutional legal status requires SACSCOC approval prior to implementation.

A substantive change committee visit is required and is authorized at the time of approval.

A change of ownership normally affects the institution's reaffirmation cycle. A change of the means of control or change of legal status may affect the institution's reaffirmation cycle.

Refer to the *Merger/Consolidation, Acquisition, Change of Ownership, and Change of Governance, Control, Form, or Legal Status* [PDF] policy for additional guidance including the approval process, prospectus requirements, and submission deadlines.

In addition to a prospectus, a change of ownership, means of control, or legal status requires non-binding notification to SACSCOC at least six months prior to the SACSCOC Board of Trustees meeting at which the prospectus will be reviewed.

☑ *What to submit*

A notification: Submit a notification at least six months prior to Board of Trustees meeting date at which the prospectus will be reviewed 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. The signatures of the chief executive officers of all participating institutions or entities.

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.

■

Prison Education Program – Institutional-level Approval

Subject to SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE RESTRICTION

REQUIRES **Approval** **Exec Council of the Board**
COMMITTEE VISIT **Required**
FEE **Yes**
Yes SUBJECT TO SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE RESTRICTION

The federal Prison Education Program (PEP) provides Pell Grant access to confined or incarcerated students. Institutional participation in the federal program is voluntary. To participate, institutions

1. enter into an agreement with an oversight entity (as defined below),
2. secure SACSCOC Prison Education Program – Institutional-level Approval, and
3. secure federal approval.

An institution must receive SACSCOC PEP approval for its first program at its first two PEP off-campus instructional sites.

SACSCOC reviews an institution's capacity, financial stability, planning, and resources to initiate and sustain PEPs to ensure the quality and integrity of curricula, instruction, learning support, library and information resources, faculty qualifications, and plans to ensure ongoing comparability of PEP versus non-PEP programs. Approval is granted or denied by the SACSCOC Board of Trustees.

Because federal regulations require the review of an institution's first two PEP off-campus instructional sites, an institution may need to submit more than one Prison Education Program – Institutional-level Approval prospectus. However, an institution may submit two sites in one PEP prospectus.

After an institution secures SACSCOC approval of its first two PEP off-campus instructional sites, it may initiate additional programs at those sites or at additional off-campus instructional sites with confined or incarcerated students without additional SACSCOC PEP approval. However, additional PEP programs or additional PEP sites may require SACSCOC notification or approval under *other non-PEP* substantive change requirements. For example, if an institution has secured SACSCOC PEP approval for two off-campus instructional sites where PEPs are delivered, no further *PEP approval* is required for a new off-campus instructional site offering PEPs; however, the new site will require SACSCOC off-campus instructional site approval prior to implementation if 50% or more of a program's instruction is offered at the site.

An institution enters into a written agreement with an oversight entity or entities responsible for the site where the PEP will be delivered. The oversight entity may be a state department of corrections or other entity responsible for overseeing correctional facilities, the Federal Bureau of Prisons, or other oversight entity consistent with federal regulations. The content and expectations of the agreement are detailed in Appendix A of this policy (see *What to Submit* below). The institution is responsible for securing the agreement *before* submitting a PEP prospectus to SACSCOC; a copy of the signed final

written agreement is submitted as part of the prospectus. The institution is responsible for coordinating the approval processes and monitoring the program with (a) the oversight entity, (2) SACSCOC, and (3) the U.S. Department of Education.

SACSCOC PEP approval is required regardless of an institution's prior experience delivering instruction at a prison or other similar facility or prior experience delivering instruction to confined or incarcerated students. A PEP delivered at an already approved off-campus instructional site must go through the PEP approval process as an institution's first or second PEP site, but the site is not required to go through the off-campus instructional site approval (by extensive review or limited review) process again.

All prisons or similar facilities with confined or incarcerated students — jails, juvenile justice facilities, penitentiaries, reformatories, work farms, and others — are considered off-campus instructional sites for PEPs regardless of the method of instructional delivery at the site (such as face-to-face, distance education, etc.).

An institution's SACSCOC financial responsibility score based on financial data submitted by an institution as part of its annual financial profile is included in the review. If the score suggests financial instability, the review may be deferred for additional information or denied approval by the SACSCOC Board of Trustees.

The first two off-campus instructional sites reviewed as part of a PEP prospectus require a substantive change committee visit. The visit is authorized by the SACSCOC Board of Trustees at the time of the PEP approval. The visit is independent of any prior off-campus instructional site visits.

All other substantive change requirements, policies, and the *Principles of Accreditation* apply without exception to programs and off-campus instructional sites delivered as part of an institution's PEP.

Federal regulations stipulate:

1. Proprietary (for-profit) institutions are ineligible for PEP approval.
2. An institution subject to adverse action by SACSCOC
   a. will have its PEP approval rescinded,
   b. must submit teach-out plans for closure approval for all PEP programs and PEP off-campus instructional sites, and
   c. is ineligible for PEP re-approval (by submitting a new PEP prospectus) for five years commencing on the date of the adverse action.
3. After its PEP approval, an institution adding a method of delivery not previously used in its PEPs must secure SACSCOC method of delivery approval prior to implementation; for more information, see Method of Delivery–Approval in this policy.

SACSCOC's PEP requirements are subject to revision as federal regulations and interpretations are updated.

Because new prison education programs *may* constitute multiple types of substantive change, an institution should carefully identify all associated substantive changes and coordinate their timing and submission to SACSCOC. Examples:

- If the PEP will be offered at a new off-campus instructional site, a separate Off-campus Instructional Site Approval (by extensive review or by limited review, as applicable) prospectus is required.
- If the PEP will offer a new program with 50% or more new content not currently taught at the institution, a separate New Program–Approval prospectus is required.

Other substantive change types that may be associated with a PEP include

- Competency-based Education,
- Course/Credit-based Approach–Institutional-level Approval,
- Competency-based Education Direct Assessment–Notification,
- Competency-based Education Direct Assessment–Approval,
- Distance Education–Institutional-level Approval,
- New Program–Approval,
- New Program–Notification,
- Off-campus Instructional Site Approval by Extensive Review,
- Off-campus Instructional Site Approval by Limited Review,

or other substantive change types as defined in the SACSCOC *Substantive Change Policy and Procedures* as determined by the institution.

PEP prospectuses will normally be reviewed by SACSCOC staff and referred to the Executive Council of the Board of Trustees for action. The submission deadline depends on the intended implementation date; those deadlines are contained elsewhere in this policy. However, if any existing SACSCOC policy requires an institution's prospectus be reviewed by the Board of Trustees (typically in June or December), then those requirements and submission deadlines prevail.

If there are multiple substantive change types associated with a PEP, institutions are encouraged to contact the substantive change staff for guidance on the coordination and timing of multiple substantive change submissions. This is especially important if the PEP includes a new off-campus instructional site requiring approval by extensive review. In general, all related substantive change types requiring notification or approval must be settled before or concurrently with the review of the PEP prospectus.

☑ *What to submit*

A prospectus: Submit a substantive change prospectus using the outline provided in Appendix A for a Prison Education Program – Institutional-level Approval (p. **Error! Bookmark not defined.**~~112111~~).

■

(End of Institutional Changes)

Program Changes

- Clock-Credit Hour Conversion (p. 48~~38~~37)
- Competency-based Education by Direct Assessment – Approval (p. 49~~39~~38)
- Competency-based Education by Direct Assessment – Notification (p. 50~~40~~39)
- Cooperative Academic Arrangements ~~Definitions and Guidelines~~ (p. 51~~41~~40)
  - Definitions and Guidelines (p. XX)
  - Cooperative Academic Arrangement with Title IV Entities (p. 53~~43~~42)
  - Cooperative Academic Arrangement with Non-Title IV Entities – Approval (p. 54~~44~~43)
  - Cooperative Academic Arrangement with Non-Title IV Entities – Notification (p. 55~~45~~44)
- Correspondence Education (p. 57~~47~~46)
- Dual Academic Award (p. 58~~48~~47)
- Joint Academic Award with non-SACSCOC Institution(s) or Entity(ies) (p. 60~~50~~49)
- Joint Academic Award with SACSCOC Institution(s) (p. 61~~51~~50)
- Method of Delivery – Approval (p. 62~~52~~51)
- Method of Delivery – Notification (p. 64~~54~~53)
- New Program – Approval (p. 66~~56~~55)
- New Program – Notification (p. 67~~57~~56)
- Program Closure (p. 68~~58~~57)
- Program Designed for Prior Learning – Approval (p. 70~~60~~59)
- Program Designed for Prior Learning – Notification (p. 71~~61~~60)
- Program Length Change (p. 72~~62~~61)
- Program Re-open (p. 74~~64~~63)

Clock-Credit Hour Conversion

REQUIRES **Approval** **Exec Council of the Board**	
COMMITTEE VISIT **No**	
FEE **No**	
No	SUBJECT TO SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE RESTRICTION

Changing a *program's* progress to completion measure from clock hours to credit hours – or from credit hours to clock hours – requires SACSCOC approval prior to implementation. (p.)

Changing an *institution's* progress to completion is an institutional-level substantive change. For additional information, refer to Change in Measure of Student Progress to Completion in this policy.

A conversion must be based on a sound academic rationale and an objective conversion formula demonstrating parity between the current and proposed measures. A conversion must demonstrate no negative impact on student learning outcomes or students' expected time to completion, and must demonstrate compliance with SACSCOC standards and policies and the institution's policies.

☑ *What to submit*

A prospectus: Submit a substantive change prospectus using the outline provided in Appendix A for a clock-credit hour conversion (p. 130~~113~~~~112~~).

■

Competency-based Education by Direct Assessment – Approval

(See also Competency-based Education by Direct Assessment – Notification, Competency-based Education by Course/Credit-based – Approval (institutional level change), and Method of Delivery - Notification.)

REQUIRES **Approval** **Full Board of Trustees**	
COMMITTEE VISIT **Required**	
FEE **Yes**	
No	SUBJECT TO SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE RESTRICTION

A program in which 50% or more of the program may be earned through the direct assessment approach to competency-based education (CBE) requires SACSCOC approval prior to implementation. *Each* direct assessment CBE program requires SACSCOC approval, independent of prior direct assessment program approvals for the institution. A new direct assessment program is subject to determination of significant departure and, as warranted, approved as a new program concurrent with the direct assessment approval prior to implementation. Approval by the full SACSCOC Board of Trustees is required. See also *Direct Assessment Competency-based Educational Programs* policy [PDF].

☑ *What to submit*

A prospectus: Submit a substantive change prospectus using the outline provided in Appendix A for a Competency-based Education by Direct Assessment – Approval (p. 131~~114~~~~113~~).

■

Competency-based Education by Direct Assessment – Notification

REQUIRES **Notification**	
COMMITTEE VISIT **No**	
FEE **No**	
No	SUBJECT TO SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE RESTRICTION

A program in which 25-49% of the program may be earned through the direct-assessment approach to competency-based education (CBE) requires SACSCOC notification prior to implementation. A new direct assessment program is subject to determination of significant departure and, as warranted, approved as a new program concurrent with the direct assessment notification prior to implementation. See also *Direct Assessment Competency-based Educational Programs* policy.

☑ *What to submit*

1. The name of the program.
2. The credential of the program (e.g., associate of applied science, certificate, etc.).
3. The instructional level of the program (associate, baccalaureate, master's, education specialist, or doctoral) if not apparent from the credential).
4. 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.
5. The intended implementation date.

■

Cooperative Academic Arrangements Definitions and Guidelines

There are three types of substantive change cooperative academic arrangements:

1. Cooperative Academic Arrangement with Title IV Entities
2. Cooperative Academic Arrangement with Non-Title IV Entities – Approval
3. Cooperative Academic Arrangement with Non-Title IV Entities – Notification

The institution's approval and notification obligations are described below by type. The institution determines if an entity is a title IV entity or a non-title IV entity for the purposes of substantive change. Refer to the definition of a program in the Glossary.

Definitions

For substantive change purposes only –

A title IV entity

- is certified to participate in U.S. Department of Education title IV programs
  —OR—
- is an administrative organization or unit that administers or coordinates academic programs across multiple educational institutions or providers
  - —AND— does not provide or is not involved in aspects of educational instruction
  - —AND— all educational institutions or providers participating in the administrative organization are certified to participate in U.S. Department of Education title IV programs.

A non-title IV entity

- is not certified to participate in U.S. Department of Education title IV programs
  —OR—
- is an administrative organization or unit that administers or coordinates academic programs across multiple educational institutions or providers
  - —AND— does provide or participates in aspects of educational instruction
  - —AND— one or more educational institutions or providers participating in the administrative organization is not certified to participate in U.S. Department of Education title IV programs.

Guidelines

An administrative organization or unit as used in these definitions include, as examples,

- a department within a state higher education coordinating board,
- a unit under the direction of an institutional system's central office,
- a coalition of colleges sharing access to its members' existing instructional resources,
- and others.

Determination examples

1. The entity is an educational institution certified to participate in title IV programs. For substantive change purposes, this is a title IV entity.
2. The entity is not certified for title IV but is an administrative unit of a state college system's governing board, the entity provides no instruction, and every college participating in the administrative unit is certified to participate in title IV programs. For substantive change purposes, this is a title IV entity.
3. The entity is not certified for title IV but is an administrative unit of a state's higher education coordinating board, the entity provides no instruction, and all but one college participating in the entity is certified to participate in title IV programs. For substantive change purposes, this is a non-title IV entity.
4. The entity is not certified for title IV but is a unit under the control of a university system's central office, the entity has hired some of the instructors providing instruction under the agreement, and every college participating in the entity is certified to participate in title IV programs: For substantive change purposes, this is a non-title IV entity.

■

Cooperative Academic Arrangement with Title IV Entities

(See also Cooperative Academic Arrangements Definitions and Guidelines.)

REQUIRES **Notification**	
COMMITTEE VISIT **No**	
FEE **No**	
No	SUBJECT TO SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE RESTRICTION

An agreement with a title IV entity (or entities) to deliver program content with credit being recorded on the SACSCOC institution's transcript as its own requires notification prior to implementation if

- 50% or more of a program is offered through the arrangement

— OR —

- the SACSCOC institution could not deliver the program without the arrangement, i.e., it is dependent on the arrangement to deliver a program.

Unless at least one of the above criteria is met and the institution transcripts the credit as its own, the arrangement with a title IV entity is not a substantive change requiring notification and nothing should be submitted to SACSCOC. If either criterion is met, notification is required and must include a copy of an agreement signed by the institution and the title IV entity. Examples of a cooperative academic arrangement include geographic or denominational consortia, statewide distance education agreements, and contractual instruction. Also refer to Standard 10.9 (Cooperative academic arrangements) of the *Principles of Accreditation*.

☑ *What to submit*

1. 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.
2. Demonstrate the institution's determination that the entity or entities in the agreement are title IV entities for the purpose of substantive change as provided in the *Cooperative Academic Arrangements Definitions and Guidelines* section of this policy.
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 intended implementation date.

■

Cooperative Academic Arrangement with Non-Title IV Entities – Approval

Subject to SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE RESTRICTION

(See also Cooperative Academic Arrangements Definitions and Guidelines.)

REQUIRES **Approval** **Exec Council of the Board**
COMMITTEE VISIT **No**
FEE **Yes**
Yes SUBJECT TO SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE RESTRICTION

An 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 requires SACSCOC approval prior to implementation. A prospectus must include the program(s) involved, names and contact information of the principal responsible parties at the institution and participating entity (or entities), and a copy of a signed agreement with the entity (or entities). SACSCOC is obligated to respond within 90 days of receipt of the notification. Also refer to Standard 10.9 of the *Principles of Accreditation*.

An institution on SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE RESTRICTION entering into a cooperative academic arrangement with a non-title IV certified entity offering up to 50% of a program requires SACSCOC approval prior to implementation (see also Cooperative Academic Arrangement with Non-Title IV Entities – Notification).

☑ *What to submit*

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. 134~~117116~~).

■

Cooperative Academic Arrangement with Non-Title IV Entities – Notification

Subject to SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE RESTRICTION

(See also Cooperative Academic Arrangements Definitions and Guidelines.)

REQUIRES **Notification**
COMMITTEE VISIT **No**
FEE **No**
Yes SUBJECT TO SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE RESTRICTION

An 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 requires notification prior to implementation. SACSCOC is obligated to respond within 90 days of receipt of the notification. Also refer to Standard 10.9 of the *Principles of Accreditation*.

An institution on SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE RESTRICTION entering into a cooperative academic arrangement with a non-title IV certified entity requires SACSCOC approval prior to implementation; notification is not an option (see also Cooperative Academic Arrangement with Non-Title IV Entities – Approval).

☑ *What to submit*

1. 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.
2. The name and credential of each program to which credits earned under the arrangement will apply.
3. 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.
4. Demonstrate the institution's determination that the entity or entities in the agreement are non-title IV entities for the purpose of substantive change as provided in the *Cooperative Academic Arrangements Definitions and Guidelines* section of this policy.
5. A statement of the institution's intent for students enrolled in the program(s) covered under the agreement to be eligible to receive title IV federal financial aid including the portion of each program or programs that will be eligible.
    a. If the intent is for students to receive title IV aid,
        i. demonstrate the institution has assessed and reached a good-faith conclusion of the program(s) title IV eligibility under the terms of the agreement, and
        ii. if any portion of any program or programs will not be eligible for title IV aid, demonstrate the institution's plan to communicate this information to the affected students prior to initial matriculation and to any other impacted party/parties.
    b. If the intent is students will not receive title IV aid, demonstrate the institution's plan to communicate this information to the affected

students prior to initial matriculation and to any other impacted party/parties.

6. A copy of a signed and dated memorandum of agreement or other document explaining the scope and responsibilities of each partnering institution or entity.
7. 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.
8. Provisions for the regular review of the agreement, including renewal and termination of the agreement; this may be included in the memorandum of agreement.
9. The intended implementation date.

■

Correspondence Education

REQUIRES **Approval** **Exec Council of the Board**
COMMITTEE VISIT **No**
FEE **Yes**
No SUBJECT TO SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE RESTRICTION

Correspondence education is 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.

Distance education requirements equally apply to correspondence education. Please refer to the distance education notification and approval requirements in this document and to the *Distance and Correspondence Education* policy [PDF].

☑ *What to submit*

Refer to the distance education notification and approval requirements.

■

Dual Academic Award

(See also Joint Academic Award with non-SACSCOC Institution(s) or Entity(ies), and *Joint Academic Award with SACSCOC Institution(s).)*

REQUIRES **Notification**	
COMMITTEE VISIT **No**	
FEE **No**	
No	SUBJECT TO SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE RESTRICTION

A dual academic award requires notification prior to implementation.

A dual academic award is an 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, seals, and officials' signatures.

A new program offered as part of a dual academic award is subject to determination of the percentage of new content and, as warranted, notification or approval as described in *Substantive Change Policy and Procedures*.

The following do not qualify as dual academic awards and thus do not require notification, but institutions are free to implement these arrangements consistent with the *Principles of Accreditation* and other policies:

- completion or pathway options *across* credential levels (e.g., a pathway leading to the award of a baccalaureate degree and a master's degree),
- agreements that address transfer articulation only, and
- agreements for individual students such as cotutelle arrangements that do not meet dual academic award criteria.

☑ *What to submit*

1. The name of each participating institution.
2. The names and contact information of the principal parties at each institution (this may be included in the memorandum of agreement; see also below).
3. The institutional accreditor of each participating institution and a statement that the accreditor either is or is not a U.S. Department of Education (USDE) recognized accreditor.
4. The academic award to be granted by *each* participating institution to include the
    a. credential (e.g., Bachelor of Arts, Certificate of Credit, Master of Business Administration, etc.) and
    b. program name (to indicate the discipline, e.g., Anthropology, Information Technology, Finance, etc.).
5. The instructional level of the academic awards (associate, baccalaureate, masters, education specialist, or doctoral) if not obvious by the credential to be awarded.

6. If one or more of the dual academic award's participating institutions is not accredited by SACSCOC, provide a plan and process created by the SACSCOC-accredited institution to ensure the partnership does not imply or create the appearance that SACSCOC accreditation extends to non-SACSCOC accredited partner institutions through representation in academic publications, news or other media releases, promotional materials, student transcripts, verifications of credentials awarded, or other communications or media.
7. A copy of a signed and dated memorandum of agreement between or amongst all participating institutions to include terms, scope, and roles and responsibilities of *each* institution as they relate to the dual academic award.
    a. If one or more of the participating institutions is not accredited by SACSCOC, then the memorandum of agreement must include
        i. an acknowledgement that the non-SACSCOC accredited institution(s) will include the following statement, verbatim, in any materials describing the dual academic award and the relationship between its institution and the SACSCOC-accredited institution:
        "[SACSCOC-accredited institution name] is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC). [Non-SACSCOC accredited institution name] is not accredited by SACSCOC. The SACSCOC accreditation of [SACSCOC-accredited institution name] does not extend to or include [non-SACSCOC accredited institution name]."
        ii. an acknowledgement that the non-SACSCOC accredited institution(s) are prohibited from using the trademarked
            a. SACSCOC "flame" logo, and
            b. SACSCOC Stamp of Accreditation.
8. A statement affirming the institution's obligations to comply with the *Institutional Obligations for Public Disclosure* policy as it applies to the dual academic award.
9. A statement affirming the dual 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)*.
10. The intended implementation date.

■

Joint Academic Award with non-SACSCOC Institution(s) or Entity(ies)

(See also Dual Academic Awards and *Joint Academic Award with SACSCOC Institution(s).)*

REQUIRES **Approval** **Exec Council of the Board**
COMMITTEE VISIT **No**
FEE **Yes**
No SUBJECT TO SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE RESTRICTION

A joint academic award with a non-SACSCOC accredited institution or entity requires approval prior to implementation.

A joint academic award is an arrangement in which 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.

Although a joint academic award's roles and tasks may be parsed across participating institutions and memorialized in an agreement, program responsibility is not severable across institutions. That is, each institution is responsible for all aspects of a joint academic award. This includes responsibility for faculty qualifications and sufficiency, student support services, student learning outcomes, and others. Even though institutions can share the work, they cannot delegate overall responsibility.

☑ *What to submit*

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. 135~~118~~~~117~~).

■

Joint Academic Award with SACSCOC Institution(s)

(See also Dual Academic Awards and *Joint Academic Award with non-SACSCOC Institution(s) or Entity(ies).)*

REQUIRES **Notification**	
COMMITTEE VISIT **No**	
FEE **No**	
No	SUBJECT TO SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE RESTRICTION

A joint academic award in which all participating institutions are SACSCOC accredited requires notification prior to implementation.

A joint academic award is an arrangement in which 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.

Although a joint academic award's roles and tasks may be parsed across participating institutions and memorialized in an agreement, program responsibility is not severable across institutions. That is, each institution is responsible for all aspects of a joint academic award. This includes responsibility for faculty qualifications and sufficiency, student support services, student learning outcomes, and others. Even though institutions can share the work, they cannot delegate overall responsibility.

Each participating institution must submit notification. (If at least one institution is not accredited by SACSCOC, approval is required; see also Joint Academic Award with non-SACSCOC Institution(s) or Entity(ies).)

☑ *What to submit*

1. The name of each participating institution.
2. The names and contact information of the principal parties at each institution (this may be included in the memorandum of agreement; see also below).
3. The joint academic award to be granted to include the
    a. credential (e.g., Graduate Certificate, Master of Science, Doctor of Philosophy, etc.) and
    b. program name (to indicate the discipline, e.g., Food Safety, Data Analytics, Neuroscience, etc.).
4. The instructional level of the program (associate, baccalaureate, master's, education specialist, or doctoral) if not obvious from the credential.
5. A copy of a signed and dated agreement between or amongst all participating institutions to include terms, scope, and roles and responsibilities of *each* institution as they relate to the joint academic award.
6. A statement affirming the institution's obligations to comply with the *Institutional Obligations for Public Disclosure* policy as it applies to the joint academic award.
7. The intended implementation date.

■

Method of Delivery – Approval

Subject to SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE RESTRICTION

REQUIRES **Approval** **Exec Council of the Board**	
COMMITTEE VISIT **No**	
FEE **No**	
Yes	SUBJECT TO SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE RESTRICTION

Adding a method of instructional delivery requires approval prior to implementation if

1. an institution is on SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE RESTRICTION

—OR—

2. an institution with SACSCOC Prison Education Program (PEP) – Institutional-level Approval adds, for the first time, a method of delivery not previously used in its PEPs. For example, if an institution's PEPs are delivered by face-to-face instruction only and the institution adds distance education as a method of delivery for the first time in a PEP, then adding the distance education method of delivery requires approval prior to implementation. All other method of delivery approvals and notifications also apply without exception as applicable: Competency-based Education by Course/Credit-based Approach – Institutional-level Approval, Competency-based Education Direct Assessment–Approval, Competency-based Education Direct Assessment – Notification, and Distance Education – Institutional-level Approval.

Institutions that are not on SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE RESTRICTION or are not adding its first method of delivery in a PEP are not required to secure approval to add a method of delivery. However, all institutions are subject to method of delivery notification (see Method of Delivery – Notification).

A specific method of delivery applies when 50% or more of a program is delivered by that method. A program may be delivered 50% or more by more than one method (students may have the option to choose from different methods of delivery for the same program, e.g., predominately face-to-face versus predominately distance education).

The three methods of delivery are

- competency-based education,
- distance education, and
- face-to-face instruction.

☑ *What to submit*

A prospectus: Submit a substantive change prospectus using the outline provided in Appendix A for method of delivery – approval (p. 137~~120119~~).

■

Method of Delivery – Notification

Subject to SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE RESTRICTION

REQUIRES **Notification**	
COMMITTEE VISIT **No**	
FEE **No**	
Yes	SUBJECT TO SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE RESTRICTION

Adding a method of instructional delivery to an existing program requires notification prior to implementation.

A specific method of delivery applies when 50% or more of a program is delivered by that method. A program may be delivered 50% or more by more than one method (students may have the option to choose from different methods of delivery for the same program, e.g., predominately face-to-face versus predominately distance education).

The three methods of delivery are

- competency-based education,
- distance education, and
- face-to-face instruction.

For example, adding a distance education delivery to an existing program delivered face-to-face requires notification.
Adding some methods of delivery may require approval as a separate type of substantive change:

- Adding a direct assessment competency-based education delivery of a program requires SACSCOC approval if 50% or more of the program can be earned by direct assessment
- Adding a course/credit-based competency-based education delivery of a program requires SACSCOC approval if 50% or more of the program can be earned by course/credit-based competency-based education *and* if the institution has not been previously approved to offer 50% or more of a program by course/credit-based competency-based education.
- Adding a distance education delivery of a program requires SACSCOC approval if 50% or more of the program can be earned by distance education *and* if the institution has not been previously approved to offer 50% or more of a program by distance education.

An institution on SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE RESTRICTION adding a method of instructional delivery to an existing program requires SACSCOC approval prior to implementation; notification is not an option (see also Method of Delivery–Approval).

☑ *What to submit*

1. The name of the program (to indicate the discipline).

2. The credential to be awarded (e.g., Associate of Arts, Master of Accounting).
3. The instructional level (associate, baccalaureate, master's, education specialist, or doctoral, if not obvious from the credential).
4. The method of delivery to be added: competency-based education, distance education, or face-to-face instruction.
5. The intended implementation date.

■

New Program – Approval

Subject to SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE RESTRICTION

REQUIRES **Approval** **Exec Council of the Board**	
COMMITTEE VISIT **No**	
FEE **Yes**	
Yes	SUBJECT TO SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE RESTRICTION

A new program with 50-100% new content is a significant departure from the institution's existing programs and requires SACSCOC approval prior to implementation.

For an institution on SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE RESTRICTION, a new program with 25-100% new content is a significant departure from the institution's existing programs and requires SACSCOC approval prior to implementation.

- Content is new if it is not currently offered by the institution at the new program's instructional level (associate, baccalaureate, master's, education specialist, or doctoral).
- A determination of the percentage of new content is made by the institution, not SACSCOC.
- New program approval equally applies to a degree, diploma, certificate, or other for-credit credential.
- If the institution is not currently approved to offer courses or programs at the new program's instructional level, a level change approval is required (e.g., the institution's first courses or programs at the baccalaureate degree level).
- Increasing the level of a program, i.e., offering a new program in a discipline at a higher instructional level than a currently offered program, is by definition a significant departure. For example, if an institution offers a baccalaureate degree program in a discipline and begins a new program in the same discipline at the master's degree level, then the new program is a significant departure and requires approval prior to implementation. This applies across all instructional levels.
- A proposed degree program that does not meet the program length requirement of Standard 9.2 of the *Principles of Accreditation* must be submitted as a New Program – Approval prospectus.

☑ *What to submit*

A prospectus: Submit a substantive change prospectus using the outline provided in Appendix A for new program approval (p. 138~~121~~~~120~~).

■

New Program – Notification

Subject to SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE RESTRICTION

REQUIRES **Notification**	
COMMITTEE VISIT **No**	
FEE **No**	
Yes	SUBJECT TO SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE RESTRICTION

A new program with 25-49% new content is a significant departure from the institution's existing programs and requires notification prior to implementation.

For an institution on SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE RESTRICTION, a new program with 25-49% new content is a significant departure from the institution's existing programs and requires SACSCOC approval prior to implementation (see also New Program – Approval).

- Content is new if it is not currently offered by the institution at the new program's instructional level (associate, baccalaureate, master's, education specialist, or doctoral).
- A determination of the percentage of new content is made by the institution, not SACSCOC.
- New program notification equally applies to a degree, diploma, certificate, or other for-credit credential.
- If the institution is not currently approved to offer courses or programs at the new program's instructional level, a level change approval is required (e.g., the institution's first courses or programs at the baccalaureate degree level).
- A proposed degree program that does not meet the program length requirement of Standard 9.2 of the *Principles of Accreditation* must be submitted as a New Program – Approval prospectus.

☑ *What to submit*

1. The name of the program (to indicate the discipline).
2. The credential to be awarded (e.g., Associate of Applied Science, Bachelor of Music, Master of Science, etc.).
3. The instructional level (associate, baccalaureate, master's, education specialist, or doctoral), if not obvious from the credential).
4. An affirmative statement that the new program consists of 25-49% new content not previously offered by the institution at the new program's instructional level.
5. The planned method(s) of delivery as defined in policy.
6. The intended implementation date.

■

Program Closure

Closing a program requires SACSCOC approval. All program closures require a teach-out plan, independent of the size of the program, number of currently enrolled students (including programs with no students enrolled), or other program characteristics.

REQUIRES **Approval** **Exec Council of the Board**	
COMMITTEE VISIT **No**	
FEE **No**	
No	SUBJECT TO SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE RESTRICTION

Closure is defined as closed to admission or entry, not the cessation of instruction; i.e., closure date is when students can no longer start, not the date instruction ends. Closure approval ensures the institution has a plan and process to provide students reasonable completion options that minimize disruption and additional costs. Because closure approval is approval of the teach-out process, not the closure per se (i.e., not after the fact), a teach-out plan should be submitted as soon as possible after the decision is made to close.

Program closure 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. Therefore, program closure approval is required if a program closes

- at a location (on-campus or off-campus instructional site) but continues to be offered at other locations, or
- by a method of delivery but continues to be offered by other methods of delivery.

Program closure is not required for a specialization embedded *within* a discipline-specific program. Depending on an institution's terminology, a specialization within a program may be called a minor, concentration, cognate, or other similar term.

Because time is of the essence – to provide students maximum time to consider and adapt to alternate completion plans – an institution may generally begin a program teach-out plan after it has been submitted to SACSCOC for approval. This assumes the institution completes a teach-out plan with all due care to address the requirements explained here and in the teach-out plan requirements in Appendix A. If upon review by SACSCOC the teach-out plan is incomplete or inadequate, the teach-out plan may be deferred pending additional information, explanation, or an acceptable revised teach-out plan is provided to SACSCOC. Although the institution may begin a teach-out immediately after submitting it, the closure is not approved until action is taken by the SACSCOC Board of Trustees. Starting and completing a teach-out plan before securing SACSCOC Board approval does not relieve the institution of its obligation to provide an acceptable teach-out plan.

The teach-out institution(s) – i.e., the institution(s) accepting displaced students from the closing program – may request an exception to Standard 9.4 (institutional credits for an undergraduate degree) and/or Standard 9.5 (institutional credits for a graduate or professional degree) to accommodate students near the end of their program of study.

Refer to the *Request for a Period of Noncompliance* policy for guidance. The institution closing its program should ensure the teach-out institution(s) are aware of this option and may wish to include it in any teach-out agreement(s) executed pursuant to the closure.

☑ *What to submit*

A teach-out plan: Submit a teach-out plan using the outline provided in Appendix A for a program closure (p. 139~~122~~~~121~~).

■

Program Designed for Prior Learning – Approval

Subject to SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE RESTRICTION

REQUIRES **Approval** **Exec Council of the Board**
COMMITTEE VISIT **No**
FEE **Yes**
Yes SUBJECT TO SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE RESTRICTION

This requirement applies only to institutions on SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE RESTRICTION; refer to the SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE RESTRICTION section for more information.

Initiating a program requiring students to possess prior learning as a condition of admission requires SACSCOC approval prior to implementation only for institutions currently on SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE RESTRICTION. For all other institutions, notification is required but approval is not.

Standard 10.7 *(Policies for awarding credit)* of the *Principles of Accreditation* applies without exception to programs designed for prior learning. A new program designed for prior learning is subject to notification or approval as a new program as defined in *Substantive Change Policy and Procedures*.

A proposed degree program that does not meet the program length requirement of Standard 9.2 of the *Principles of Accreditation* must be submitted as a New Program – Approval prospectus.

☑ *What to submit*

A prospectus: Submit a substantive change prospectus using the outline provided in Appendix A for a program designed for prior learning (p. 140~~123~~~~122~~).

■

Program Designed for Prior Learning – Notification

Subject to SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE RESTRICTION

REQUIRES **Notification**	
COMMITTEE VISIT **No**	
FEE **No**	
Yes	SUBJECT TO SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE RESTRICTION

Initiating a program requiring students to possess prior learning as a condition of admission requires notification prior to implementation.

Standard 10.7 *(Policies for awarding credit)* of the *Principles of Accreditation* applies without exception to programs designed for prior learning. A new program designed for prior learning is subject to notification or approval as a new program as defined in *Substantive Change Policy and Procedures*.

An institution on SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE RESTRICTION initiating a program requiring students to possess prior learning as a condition of admission requires SACSCOC approval prior to implementation; notification is not an option (see also Program Designed for Prior Learning – Approval).

A proposed degree program that does not meet the program length requirement of Standard 9.2 of the *Principles of Accreditation* must be submitted as a New Program – Approval prospectus.

☑ *What to submit*

1. The name of the program (to include the program's discipline).
2. The credential to be awarded (e.g., Bachelor of Applied Science, Master of Professional Studies, etc.).
3. The program's instructional level (associate, baccalaureate, master's, education specialist, or doctoral, if not obvious from the credential).
4. A description of the prior learning required as a condition of admission.
5. 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 participate 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.
6. The intended implementation date.

■

Program Length Change

Subject to SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE RESTRICTION

REQUIRES **Approval** **Exec Council of the Board**
COMMITTEE VISIT **No**
FEE **Yes**
Yes SUBJECT TO SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE RESTRICTION

A change in program length – for either an increase or a decrease – requires SACSCOC approval prior to implementation if

- 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.

This requirement equally applies to degree, diploma, certificate, or other for-credit credentials.

A proposed degree program that does not meet the program length requirement of Standard 9.2 of the *Principles of Accreditation* must be submitted as a New Program – Approval prospectus.

SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE RESTRICTION: An institution on SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE RESTRICTION requires SACSCOC approval prior to implementation if 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, regardless of whether the students' expected time to completion changes. That is, the second criterion above does not apply to institution on SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE RESTRICTION:

- A change in program length if 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
  (versus the same percentage plus the additional criterion of changing expected time to completion by more than one term or its equivalent for institutions not on restriction).

Exception: An institution may, at its discretion, seek Program Length Change approval even if none of the criteria defined herein *requiring* approval are met. This exception allows an institution to secure approval as may be required under 34 C.F.R. § 668.14(b)(26), effective July 1, 2024, or other federal regulations, that limit program length for certain gainful employment programs. The determination of the need for Program Length Change approval rests solely with the institution. All other requirements, including the prospectus content, apply to Program Length Change approvals under this exception.

☑ *What to submit*

A prospectus: Submit a substantive change prospectus using the outline provided in Appendix A for a program length change (p. 141~~124~~~~123~~).

■

Program Re-open

REQUIRES **Notification**	
COMMITTEE VISIT **No**	
FEE **No**	
No	SUBJECT TO SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE RESTRICTION

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, not necessarily the date of last instruction or the date SACSCOC approved the closure. If more than five years have elapsed, the program is subject to new program notification or approval.

Note: If a closed program resulted in an institutional obligation to seek either Level Authorization Removal approval or Level Change to a Lower Level approval, then the program is not eligible to be re-opened. That is, if an institution closed its final program at an instructional or credential level -- associate, baccalaureate, masters, specialist, or doctoral -- then that program is ineligible to be re-opened and the institution is obligated to seek Level Change Addition approval or Level Change to a Higher Level approval for the program as defined in this policy. For assistance in determining if a program is eligible to be re-opened, contact the substantive change office.

☑ *What to submit*

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 (associate, baccalaureate, master's, education specialist, or doctoral 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 intended implementation date, i.e., the date new students will matriculate.

■

(End of Program Changes)

Off-campus Instructional Site / Additional Location Changes

- Off-campus Instructional Site Definitions and Guidelines (p. 766665)
- Off-campus Instructional Site Notification (p. 786867)
- Off-campus Instructional Site Approval (including branch campus) (p. 796968)
  - Extensive Review (p. 796968)
  - Limited Review (p. 817170)
  - Committee Visits (p. 837372)
- Off-campus Instructional Site Relocation ~~Definitions and Guidelines~~ (p. 847473)
  - Definitions and Guidelines
  - Non-branch Campus (p. 857574)
  - Branch Campus (p. 867675)
- Off-campus Instructional Site Name or Address Change (p. 877776)
- Off-campus Instructional Site Closure (p. 897978)
- Off-campus Instructional Site Re-open (p. 918180)

Off-campus Instructional Site Definitions and Guidelines

Definitions

- Off-campus instructional site: A location
  - geographically apart from an institution's sole main campus and
  - where instruction is delivered.

- Branch campus: A special form of off-campus instructional site
  - that is geographically apart from an institution's main campus,
  - where instruction is delivered, and
  - is independent of the main campus of an institution. An off-campus instructional site is independent of the main campus if it
    - is permanent;
    - offers courses in educational programs leading to a degree, diploma, certificate, or other for-credit credential;
    - has its own faculty and administrative or supervisory organization; and
    - has its own budgetary and hiring authority.

- Program: For the purpose of an off-campus instructional site, a for-credit credential for which an institution awards a degree, diploma, certificate, or other credential at any level of instruction.

- Percentage of program instruction: The percentage of the *total* instruction required to earn a credential measured in credit hours, clock hours, competencies, or other generally accepted measure of progress to completion.

Guidelines

- Off-campus instructional site requirements apply without exception to dual enrollment sites.
- If instruction is delivered by distance education (synchronously or asynchronously) to a location geographically apart from an institution's sole main campus
  — AND —
  if a student is required to be at the location to receive instruction, then the location is an off-campus instructional site.
- A clinical training site at which no didactic instruction is delivered is *not* an off-campus instructional site.
- A location at which no instruction is delivered to students is *not* an off-campus instructional site, e.g., a distance education video studio (with no students physically present), an off-campus student services complex, or administrative offices.
- Site names must be unique for an institution; an institution cannot have multiples sites with identical names. Check the SACSCOC website or Institutional Portal to verify before submitting.

- Site addresses must be unique for an institution; an institution cannot have multiple sites with identical addresses. Check the SACSCOC website or Institutional Portal to verify before submitting.

■

Off-campus Instructional Site Notification

(See also Off-campus Instructional Site Definitions and Guidelines.)

REQUIRES **Notification**	
COMMITTEE VISIT **No**	
FEE **No**	
No	SUBJECT TO SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE RESTRICTION

An off-campus instructional site at which 25-49% of a program's instruction is delivered requires notification prior to implementation.

Instruction at a site may cross the 25% notification threshold any time after the institution submits notification; the institution does not have to wait for a SACSCOC response to implement (note this applies to site notification only, not to site approval).

☑ *What to submit*

1. Site name (must be unique, i.e., it cannot be the same as an institution's existing site).
2. The physical address or location of the site (i.e., no post office box numbers).
3. The intended implementation date.

■

Off-campus Instructional Site Approval (including branch campus)

(See also Off-campus Instructional Site Definitions and Guidelines.)

An off-campus instructional site at which 50% or more of a program's instruction is delivered requires SACSCOC approval prior to implementation.

An off-campus instructional site may qualify as a branch campus; refer to the federally defined branch campus criteria under *Off-campus Instructional Site Definitions and Guidelines*. Before submitting a prospectus for approval of branch campus, ensure – and demonstrate in the prospectus – *all* branch campus criteria are met. A site name may not include "branch" or "branch campus" unless approved as a branch campus as defined in policy.

There are two site approval pathways:

- approval by extensive review, and
- approval by limited review.

The pathway available to an institution depends on

- the number of sites previously approved by extensive review, and
- the status of an institution as explained below for each pathway.

Extensive Review
Subject to SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE RESTRICTION

An extensive review has two components:

- an institutional-level review, and
- a site-specific review.

The purpose of the institutional-level review is to ensure institutional capacity and planning to offer courses away from its main campus and to ensure quality across locations. Institutional capacity and planning considers

- adequacy of faculty, facilities, resources, and academic and student support services at sites;
- sufficient fiscal and administrative capacity to add additional sites;
- clear academic control of sites;
- regular evaluation of all sites;
- financial stability of the institution;
- engagement in long-range planning for expansion;
- and other factors.

The site-specific review considers

- physical resources including specialized equipment or materials at a site,
- qualifications of faculty at the site,
- adequate financial resources and financial planning for the site,
- adequacy of library and learning/information resource available to students at the site, adequacy of student support services available to student at the site,
- and other factors.

There are two extensive review approval methods:

- **Approval method one** – Approval of an off-campus instructional site by extensive review method one is required if the institution, at the time a site prospectus is submitted to SACSCOC,

  - has less than two sites approved under the extensive review criteria and process,
    —OR—
  - has not successfully completed at least one reaffirmation of accreditation,
    —OR—
  - is on SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE RESTRICTION.

REQUIRES **Approval** **Full Board of Trustees**
COMMITTEE VISIT **Contingent**
FEE **Yes**
Yes SUBJECT TO SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE RESTRICTION

Approval by the SACSCOC Board of Trustees based on a prospectus review: The institution prepares and submits an off-campus instructional site by extensive review prospectus. The prospectus, in part, addresses the requirements listed above; refer to Appendix A of this document for guidance and requirements. An extensive review prospectus is reviewed by the full SACSCOC Board of Trustees at a regularly scheduled biannual meeting, usually in June and December. Submission due dates are published in this policy and on the SACSCOC website.

An institution may submit a single prospectus for up to ten off-campus instructional sites provided program offerings are *identical* across all sites; otherwise, a separate prospectus (or prospectuses) is required for exceptions.

☑ *What to submit*

A prospectus: Submit a substantive change prospectus using the outline provided in Appendix A for off-campus instructional site approval by extensive review (p. 142~~125~~124).

- **Approval method two** – Approval by the SACSCOC Board of Trustees based on inclusion and review at reaffirmation: An existing, approved site(s) that was (a) included as an approved site on the Institutional Summary Form submitted as part of the institution's on-site reaffirmation review and (b) reviewed by the on-site reaffirmation committee to include the site- and institutional-level extensive review requirements, will be considered approved by extensive review after the SACSCOC Board of Trustees takes positive action on the institution's reaffirmation. Approval method two applies to institutions reaffirmed in 2020 or afterwards.

  REQUIRES
  No action by the institution

  Note: If an institution is on SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE RESTRICTION for a reason(s) related to an off-campus instructional site(s), approval(s) by method two may be postponed while the institution is on restriction.

Sites approved before the extensive review requirement was included in policy in 2020 are not deemed approved by extensive review except as provided by approval method two described above.

Limited Review
Subject to SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE RESTRICTION

Approval of an off-campus instructional site by limited review is required if the institution, at the time a site prospectus is submitted to SACSCOC,

- has two or more sites approved under the extensive review criteria and process,
  —AND—
- has successfully completed at least one reaffirmation of accreditation,
  —AND—
- is not on SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE RESTRICTION.

REQUIRES
Approval
Exec Council of the Board

COMMITTEE VISIT
Contingent

FEE
Yes

Yes SUBJECT TO SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE RESTRICTION

Approval by limited review requires approval by the Executive Council of the SACSCOC Board of Trustees. Executive Council reviews occur year-round. The prospectus submission due date depends on the planned implementation date; due dates are published in this policy and on the SACSCOC website.

An institution on SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE RESTRICTION does not have the option of a limited review: all off-campus instructional site approvals are through the extensive review pathway only.

An institution may submit a single prospectus for up to ten off-campus instructional sites provided program offerings are *identical* across all sites; otherwise, a separate prospectus (or prospectuses) is required for exceptions.

☑ *What to submit*

A prospectus: Submit a substantive change prospectus using the outline provided in Appendix A for off-campus instructional site approval by limited review (p. 144~~127126~~).

Off-campus Instructional Site Committee Visits

(See also *Committee Visits*, *International Off-campus Instructional Sites*)

A substantive change committee visit is required if *any* of the following criteria is met at the time an off-campus instructional site is approved:

- the site is a branch campus;
- the institution has less than three already-approved off-campus instructional sites — i.e., the institution's first three approved sites each require a visit;
- the institution has not successfully completed at least one reaffirmation of accreditation;
- the institution is on sanction (Warning, Probation, or Probation for Good Cause);
- any of the *International Off-campus Instructional Sites* conditions in the *Committee Visits* section of this policy is met; or
- the institution has not, in the professional judgment of SACSCOC staff, demonstrated effective oversight of off-campus instructional sites or if there is reason to believe the institution may not be able to meet all SACSCOC requirements at the new off-campus instructional site.

A visit is authorized by the Board of Trustees at the time of approval. The SACSCOC President is also authorized to appoint a substantive change committee.

If a committee is authorized to visit an additional location, the committee is required to determine compliance with the *Principles of Accreditation*, including verification of personnel, facilities, and resources as asserted by the institution in its application for the additional site.

Exception. An off-campus instructional site approved by the extensive review approval method two, as defined herein, is not subject to a substantive change committee visit; the site would have been subject to review as part of the institution's reaffirmation of accreditation.

Refer to the committee visits section of this policy for additional information, including additional considerations for visits to international off-campus instructional sites.

■

Off-campus Instructional Site Relocation Definitions and Guidelines

Definition: Moving instruction to a new location geographically separate from – i.e., non-contiguous to – the current location.

Note: If instruction is not moving but the name or physical address only of a site will change (e.g., renaming a street, changing the ZIP code, or re-branding the site), see *Off-campus Instructional Site Name or Address Change*.

Guidelines and requirements:

- The new location must serve the same geographic area or the same pool of students. Otherwise, the current location must be closed (requires a teach-out plan and closure approval) and the new location subject to notification or approval.
- Instruction cannot overlap at the current location and the new location. All instruction must end at the current location no later than the beginning of instruction at the new location. If concurrent instruction is unavoidable, the current location is subject to closure approval and the new location is subject to notification or approval.
- A site relocation applies to relocating a single current location to a single new location; a current location cannot relocate to multiple other locations. If the institution is moving instruction from one location to multiple other locations, it may relocate the current location to one new location, and all additional new locations are subject to notification or approval as new off-campus instructional sites. A relocation results in no net change in the number of off-campus instructional sites of the institution.
- If the new location is an existing off-campus instructional site for the institution, moving instruction is not a site relocation: it is a closure of the current location (requires a teach-out plan and closure approval).
- An unavoidable and unforeseeable relocation may be eligible for emergency relocation. Refer to the *Emergency Temporary Relocation of Instruction* policy [PDF] for guidance. Emergency relocation is available for instruction at off-campus instructional sites and the institution's main campus.
- If relocating multiple sites, submit each relocation separately.

■

Off-campus Instructional Site Relocation – Non-branch Campus

REQUIRES **Notification**	
COMMITTEE VISIT **No**	
FEE **No**	
No	SUBJECT TO SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE RESTRICTION

Relocating an off-campus instructional site that is not a branch campus requires notification prior to implementation. This equally applies to notified sites and to approved sites.

☑ *What to submit*

1. 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.
2. The name and address of the site at its new location.
3. The intended implementation date, i.e., the effective date of the move.
4. A statement stipulating there will be no overlap of instruction at the two locations.

■

Off-campus Instructional Site Relocation – Branch Campus

REQUIRES **Approval** **Exec Council of the Board**	
COMMITTEE VISIT **No**	
FEE **Yes**	
No	SUBJECT TO SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE RESTRICTION

Relocating an off-campus instructional site that is a branch campus requires SACSCOC approval prior to implementation. A prospectus is required.

☑ *What to submit*

A prospectus: Submit a substantive change prospectus using the outline provided in Appendix A for off-campus instructional site relocation of a branch campus (p. 145~~128~~~~127~~).

■

Off-campus Instructional Site Name or Address Change

REQUIRES **Notification**	
COMMITTEE VISIT **No**	
FEE **No**	
No	SUBJECT TO SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE RESTRICTION

An institution ensures the current names and addresses of its off-campus instructional sites are on record with SACSCOC. Changing the name or address of an off-campus instructional site requires notification prior to implementation.

Name change: A site name should be unique to the institution (i.e., no duplicate site names). The site name can include "branch" or "branch campus" only if the site has been approved as a branch campus and is on record with SACSCOC as approved as a branch campus. The name of a site may not suggest to students, prospective students, or the public that the site is a separate institution or a separately accredited institution.

Address change: An off-campus instructional address change differs from an off-campus instructional site relocation:

- an address change is an update or correction to an address but the physical location at which instruction is delivered is unchanged, whereas
- a relocation is moving instruction to a new location geographically separate from – i.e., non-contiguous to – the current location (see also *Off-campus Instructional Site Relocation*).

Examples of an address change include

- adding a qualifier to a street name (e.g., NE or SW),
- changing a suite or room number,
- changing a postal ZIP code,
- correcting a previously submitted mailing address instead of the physical address at which instruction is delivered,
- correcting a previously submitted post office box number instead of a physical address,
- renaming or renumbering a street or road,
- and others.

☑ *What to submit*

1. 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.
2. 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).

3. The intended implementation date (i.e., the effective date) of the change.
4. A statement stipulating the name and/or address change does not include a change of instructional location as described above.

Alternate method

Site name and address changes may be directly made in the SACSCOC Institutional Portal without creating a substantive change submission. Refer to the *User Guide* available in the Institutional Portal for technical guidance. Changeable fields can be edited on-screen. Screening and validation information are collected from the institution when making name and address changes; the institution's responses are made part of the record. Be prepared to provide the same information noted above under ☑*What to submit* when making changes using this alternate method.

Notes:

1. This alternate method applies to site name and address changes only; it is not an option for a site relocation.
2. Site name and address changes made using this alternate method are systematically selected for audit or may be audited for cause. An institution must provide, upon selection, (1) all information noted above under *What to submit* and (2) evidence to document the prior address and the updated address are the same physical location. Changes that are not adequately documented will be reversed.

■

Off-campus Instructional Site Closure

REQUIRES **Approval** **Exec Council of the Board**	
COMMITTEE VISIT **No**	
FEE **No**	
No	SUBJECT TO SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE RESTRICTION

Closing an off-campus instructional site requires SACSCOC approval. Closure approval equally applies to

- notified sites and
- approved sites.

All off-campus instructional site closures require a teach-out plan, independent of the size of the site, location of the site, number of currently enrolled students (including sites with no students enrolled), or other site characteristics.

For SACSCOC, a site is considered closed as of the date the institution stops admitting students to the site; closure is *not* the date of last instruction.

Closure is defined this way because SACSCOC's approval is of the teach-out process, not the closure per se, to help ensure students have reasonable opportunities to complete their program of study as originally planned at initial matriculation and with minimal disruption and additional costs. Because closure approval is for the teach-out process, not the closure per se (i.e., not after the fact), a teach-out plan should be submitted as soon as possible after the decision is made to close. Institutional, system, or state definitions of closure must be reconciled by the institution with the SACSCOC definition.

If a program will no longer be offered at a site but the site will remain open for other programs, see program closure approval requirements under Program Closure.

A teach-out plan is due to SACSCOC as soon as possible after the institution decides to close a site.

Because time is of the essence – to provide students maximum time to consider and adapt to alternate completion plans – an institution may generally begin a site teach-out plan after it has been submitted to SACSCOC for approval. This assumes the institution completes a teach-out plan with all due care to address the requirements explained here and in the teach-out plan requirements in Appendix A. If upon review by SACSCOC the teach-out plan is incomplete or inadequate, the teach-out plan may be deferred pending additional information, explanation, or an acceptable revised teach-out plan is provided to SACSCOC. Although the institution may begin a teach-out immediately after submitting it, the closure is not approved until action is taken by the SACSCOC Board of Trustees. Starting and completing a teach-out plan before securing SACSCOC Board approval does not relieve the institution of its obligation to provide an acceptable teach-out plan.

The teach-out institution(s) – i.e., the institution(s) accepting displaced students from the closing off-campus instructional site – may request an exception to Standard 9.4 (institutional credits for an undergraduate degree) and/or Standard 9.5 (institutional credits for a graduate or professional degree) to accommodate students near the end of their

program of study. Refer to the *Request for a Period of Noncompliance* policy for guidance. The institution closing its off-campus instructional site should ensure the teach-out institution(s) are aware of this option and may wish to include it in any teach-out agreement(s) executed pursuant to the closure.

☑ *What to submit*

A teach-out plan: Submit a teach-out plan using the outline provided in Appendix A for an off-campus instructional site closure (p. 146~~129~~~~128~~).

■

Off-campus Instructional Site Re-open

REQUIRES **Notification**	
COMMITTEE VISIT **No**	
FEE **No**	
No	SUBJECT TO SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE RESTRICTION

An off-campus instructional site previously approved for closure may be re-opened within five years of the closure date by submitting notification. The closure date is the date the site was closed to admission, not necessarily the date of last instruction or the date SACSCOC approved the closure. If more than five years have elapsed, the site is subject to notification or approval as a new site. The name of a site may be changed concurrent with its re-opening, but the address of a site when re-opened must be the same as the address on record with the site was approved for closure.

Notes:

- A re-opened site is ineligible for relocation until at least one full academic term of instruction has been offered and completed at the site with students enrolled after the site was re-opened.
- A re-opened site is subject to review and visit by a peer review committee at the institution's next accreditation reviews.

☑ *What to submit*

1. The name and address of the site as it appears on the SACSCOC letter approving the site's closure.
2. 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.
3. The name of the site upon its re-opening.
4. The intended implementation date (i.e., the effective date) of the re-opening.
5. 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.

■

(End of Off-campus Instructional Site / Additional Location Changes)

Other Changes

Implementation Extension

(See also implementation dates and implementation time limits in the General Requirements section)

REQUIRES **Approval** Exec Council of the Board	
COMMITTEE VISIT **No**	
FEE **No**	
No	SUBJECT TO SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE RESTRICTION

An institution may request an implementation extension for cause for a previously approved substantive change. Except for substantive changes that must be implemented within 30 days as defined in policy, approved substantive change must be implemented within two years of approval (see also Implementation time limit in the General Requirements section of the substantive change policy). An implementation extension may be approved for a maximum of one year (i.e., 12 months) beyond the policy-defined two year implementation limit commencing with the date the SACSCOC Board of Trustees approval of the substantive change. If the substantive change is not implemented by the end of the approved extension but the institution still wants to implement, then the institution must re-submit a prospectus for approval prior to implementation.

- If a substantive change was not implemented by the intended implementation date as submitted in the prospectus but will be implemented within two years of the approval date, then an implementation extension is not necessary.
- Implementation extension is available for substantive changes requiring *approval* only; for substantive changes requiring *notification* only, reasonable extensions are the institution's prerogative.
- Only one implementation extension may be approved for a substantive change.
- An implementation extension request must be submitted within two years of the substantive change's approval date.
- Acquisition; governance change; merger / consolidation; and ownership, means of control, or legal status change are not eligible for implementation extension.

☑ *What to submit*

Submit a substantive change request using the outline provided in Appendix A for Implementation Extension (p. 147~~130~~~~129~~).

■

(End of Other Changes)

SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE RESTRICTION

An institution on SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE RESTRICTION is subject to different or additional requirements for certain types of substantive change. An institution is on SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE RESTRICTION if it

- is currently on
  - Warning,
  - Probation, or
  - Probation for Good Cause;

  —OR—

- was removed from Warning, Probation, or Probation for Good Cause within the prior three years;

  —OR—

- is currently on provisional certification for participation in federal financial aid programs as defined in 34 C.F.R. § 668.13.*

Alternately stated: An institution is on SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE RESTRICTION while on sanction (Warning, Probation, or Probation for Good Cause), for three years after removal from sanction, or while on provisional certification for federal financial aid programs.

Institutions on SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE RESTRICTION are subject to the following different or additional substantive change requirements:

Off-campus instructional site changes —

- Approval through the extensive review pathway of all new off-campus instructional sites offering 50% or more of a program; i.e., the limited review pathway is not available
  (versus two sites approved through the extensive pathway then approval through the limited review pathway thereafter for institutions not on restriction).

* If an institution is under provisional certification for participation in federal financial aid programs *and* if the institution is directed to do so by the U.S. Department of Education, then the institution is required to submit an Institutional Contingency Teach-out Plan for approval by the SACSCOC Board of Trustees as described in this policy. This requirement is in addition to the institution being on SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE RESTRICTION.

Program changes —

- Approval of new programs with 25% or more new content
  (versus 50% for institutions not on restriction),
- Approval of a change in program length if 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
  (versus the same percentage plus the additional criterion of changing expected time to completion by one term or more for institutions not on restriction),
- Approval to add a method of delivery to an existing program
  (versus notification for institutions not on restriction),
- Approval to initiate a program designed for prior learning
  (versus notification for institutions not on restriction),
- Approval of an 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
  (versus notification for institutions not on restriction).

■

Committee Visits

A substantive change committee visit is a quality assurance mechanism designed to ensure the quality of an approved substantive change and to ensure the institution remains in compliance with all *Principles of Accreditation* and policies.

A committee visit is required for certain types of substantive change. A committee visit may also be required if certain institutional conditions are met. A committee visit is authorized at the time a substantive change is approved. The SACSCOC Board of Trustees and the SACSCOC President are authorized to appoint a substantive change committee to review an institution for any change requiring a more in-depth evaluation beyond the prospectus submitted by the institution. The Report of the Substantive Change Committee is reviewed by the SACSCOC Board of Trustees to determine ongoing accreditation status of an institution. A committee visit is generally within six months after *implementation* of the change.

A substantive change committee visit is required for the following seven types of substantive change. The criteria for a committee visit are detailed under the specific requirements by substantive change type in policy.

1. **Initiating an off-campus instructional site that requires SACSCOC approval.**

   In addition to a committee visit at the time of approval if one or more visit criteria are met, visits to a representative sample of off-campus instructional sites are required at the fifth-year interval between reaffirmations if the additional sites have been initiated since the last reaffirmation and if the sites have not been visited. At any time, SACSCOC may choose to authorize a visit to a new site(s) developed between the fifth-year review and the next scheduled reaffirmation of accreditation. As part of reaffirmation, SACSCOC conducts a thorough review of a representative sample of approved off-campus instructional sites. The extent of the review at reaffirmation depends, in part, on whether there has been a recent review of the site(s).

   If a committee is authorized to visit an additional location, the committee is required to determine compliance with the *Principles of Accreditation*, including verification of personnel, facilities, and resources as asserted by the institution in its application for the additional site.

   The institution-specific criteria for a committee visit are listed in the in the Off-campus Instructional Site – Approval section of policy.

2. **Initiating a branch campus.**

   The criteria to qualify an off-campus instructional site as a branch campus are listed in the Off-campus Instructional Site Approval section of the procedures.

Initiating a branch campus requires a committee visit regardless of the number of already-approved off-campus instructional sites.

3. **Initiating a change in governance or a change in ownership with a change in control.**

   Refer to the *Merger/Consolidation, Acquisition, Change of Ownership, and Change of Governance, Control, Form, or Legal Status* policy for additional information.

4. **Initiating a merger / consolidation or acquisition.**

   Refer to the *Merger/Consolidation, Acquisition, Change of Ownership, and Change of Governance, Control, Form, or Legal Status* policy for additional information.

5. **Initiating a level change**.

   Initiating coursework or programs at a different level than currently approved requires level change approval and a substantive change committee visit. Depending on the existing related programs offered by an institution, a committee visit may not be required of institutions moving from Levels III (offers the master's degree as the highest degree) to IV (offers the master's and specialist degree as the highest degrees) or from Levels V (offers three or fewer doctoral degrees as the highest degrees) to VI (offering four or more doctoral degrees as the highest degrees). A level change adding authorization of a degree level lower than the highest degree level currently authorized for an institution may not require a visit if the new program(s) at the lower degree level do not constitute a significant departure from existing programs. ~~Refer to the *Seeking Accreditation at a Higher or Lower Degree Level* policy for additional information~~

6. **Initiating a competency-based education by direct assessment program that requires SACSCOC approval**.

   A committee visit is required for *each* competency-based education by direct assessment program that is approved.

7. **Initiating a Prison Education Program at an off-campus instructional site.**

   A committee visit is required for the first two off-campus instructional sites approved under the Prison Education Program – Institutional-level Approval requirements. The committee visit requirement applies regardless of any prior approval or committee visit to the site.

Commented [KS6]: Pending Board approval to retire the separate level change policy after all content added to the substantive change policy and procedure.

International Off-campus Instructional Sites

First International Site

Any other requirement for a substantive change committee visit notwithstanding, approval of an institution's first international[*] off-campus instructional site requires authorization of a substantive change committee visit.

Subsequent International Sites

Approval of an institution's subsequent international[*] off-campus instructional site may include authorization of a substantive change committee visit at the discretion of the SACSCOC Board of Trustees. Staff consider the following in making a committee visit recommendation to the Board:

- the institution's experience managing off-campus instructional sites, in general;
- the institution's experience managing international off-campus instructional sites, in particular, including sites in the proposed country or territory;
- known issues based on prior accreditation reviews suggesting institutional challenges to providing effective oversight of off-campus instructional sites; and
- the feasibility of visiting the site as part of a Fifth-year Interim Review or Reaffirmation within two years of approval of the site.

Authorization of a substantive change committee visit to an international site is made by the Board at the time an off-campus instructional site is approved. Any other off-campus instructional site committee requirement – e.g., approval of a site as a branch campus, approval of the institution's first three sites, etc. – supersedes an optional international site visit described herein.

■

[*] Any site outside of the country of the institution's main campus; United States territories (American Samoa, Guam, Northern Mariana Islands, Puerto Rico, and U.S. Virgin Island) may be considered outside of the United States for off-campus instructional site purposes.

Fees and Expenses

Review Fee

The following fees as assessed for review of a substantive change prospectus or application:

- Review of a substantive change prospectus or level change application.....**$500**
  An institution may submit a single prospectus for up to ten off-campus instructional sites provided program offerings are *identical* across all sites; otherwise, a separate prospectus (or prospectuses) is required for exceptions.

- Fee per institution for a substantive change involving multiple institutions or entities (e.g., change of ownership, etc.) billed to the lead institution.....**$500**

- Fee per institution for a substantive change involving multiple institutions or entities (merger/consolidation, acquisition) billed to the lead institution.....**$5,000**

- Fee per non-SACSCOC institution or entity for a substantive change involving institutions or entities (e.g., a merger / consolidation, change of ownership, etc.) billed to the lead SACSCOC-accredited institution **$7,500**

SACSCOC invoices review fees.

Substantive Change Committee Visit Fee and Expenses

In addition to the review fee, the following fee and expenses will be assessed to an institution hosting a substantive change committee visit:

- Actual cost of the committee visit including travel, lodging, Incidental Fee for each reviewer, and related expenses.....**Actual cost**
  and
- Administrative fee.....**$2,000**

■

Unreported Substantive Change

(See also "Non-compliance" in the policy section of Substantive Change Policy and Procedures)

If an institution discovers it is non-compliant with *Substantive Change Policy and Procedures* or Standard 14.2 (substantive change) -- i.e., an unreported substantive change -- the top priority is to remedy the unreported change as soon as possible. This is accomplished by submitting, through the established substantive change submission process, either the notification or the prospectus for approval for the unreported substantive change.

Institutions are advised, when an unreported substantive change is discovered, to undertake a thorough institutional review to identify *all* possible unreported substantive changes. Once the population of unreported substantive changes is identified, each instance is separately addressed by submitting the appropriate notification or prospectus for approval. If multiple unreported substantive changes are identified, the institution should

- submit each instance at about the same time (i.e., within a few days of each other), and
- note, in each submission, that multiple instances of unreported substantive change have been identified and the institution is submitting each for review (e.g., "We have discovered three unreported substantive changes; this submission addresses the first," and "We have discovered three unreported substantive changes; this submission addresses the second," etc.) This will allow multiple instances to be included in the review of the institution's substantive change policy and procedures, if warranted, as explained in this procedures section.

Upon review of the institution's submission(s) of previously unreported substantive change, the institution may be asked to submit its institutional substantive change policy and procedures for review at a regularly scheduled SACSCOC Board of Trustees meeting. The purpose of the review is developmental to help the institution ensure it has adequate policy and procedures in place to identify and report substantive changes in a timely manner in keeping with SACSCOC requirements. Requests for the institution's substantive change policy and procedures are included in the response letter from SACSCOC addressing the unreported substantive change; i.e., do not submit institutional substantive change policy and procedures proactively.

If the institution has not, since its last reaffirmation, been previously asked for its institutional substantive change policy and procedures for Board review, the institution submits its policy only. If the institution has, since its last reaffirmation, been previously asked for its institutional substantive change policy and procedures for Board review, the institution submits its policy and submits a narrative assessment of why the previously reviewed policy and procedures again failed to identify substantive changes requiring notification or approval prior to implementation.

■

Review Procedures

Staff Options

Upon receipt of a substantive change prospectus, a SACSCOC staff member will review the prospectus and any supporting material submitted by the institution and will:

1. recommend to the SACSCOC Board of Trustees approval the substantive change, or
2. refer the substantive change to the SACSCOC Committee on Compliance and Reports for review and a final recommendation to the Board of Trustees.

Options of the Committee on Compliance and Reports Following Review of the Prospectus or Application

Prospectus: The Committee will review the prospectus and any additional material submitted, and will recommend one of the following actions:

1. Accept the prospectus or recommend approval of the change, with or without a site visit.
2. Defer action and seek additional information.
3. Recommend denial of approval of the substantive change and continue the institution's accreditation. The reason for denial of approval may have been caused by an institution's current non-compliance with a standard or requirement. Consequently, denial may be accompanied by monitoring or imposition of a sanction.

Application: An application for offering programs at a level different from that for which the institution is approved is automatically referred to the Committees on Compliance and Reports, except for a change in degree levels from III to IV and from V to VI which are reviewed by staff. The Committee will review the application and any additional material submitted, and will recommend one of the following actions:

1. Accept the application and approve the change, with a site visit within six months after initiation of the substantive change.
2. Defer action and seek additional information.
3. Deny approval of the substantive change and continue the institution's accreditation. The reason for denial of approval may have been caused by an institution's current non-compliance with a standard or requirement. Consequently, denial may be accompanied by monitoring or imposition of a sanction.

Preparation for a Substantive Change Committee Visit

When a Substantive Change Committee is authorized, it is charged with determining the institution's continued compliance with the *Principles of Accreditation* following the initiation of the change. The visit will occur within six months after initiation of the change. In preparation for this visit, the institution will complete the appropriate substantive change documentation template which cites relevant Standards and the roster of faculty members who will be teaching in the program or at the site. Both the template and the Faculty Roster form are available on the SACSCOC Web site (www.sacscoc.org) under *Substantive Changes*. The institution's SACSCOC staff representative will inform the institution of the composition and schedule for the Committee.

Options of the Committee on Compliance and Reports Following Review by a Substantive Change Committee

The report of the Substantive Change Committee, together with the response of the institution to the recommendations contained in that report (due within five months of the Committee visit), will be reviewed by the Committee on Compliance and Reports. The Committee on Compliance and Reports may recommend one of the following actions:

1. Continue the institution in accreditation, with or without a monitoring report.
2. Continue the institution in accreditation, impose a sanction, and request a monitoring report, with/without a special committee visit (mandatory visit if placed on Probation).
3. Discontinue accreditation.

Teach-outs

A teach-out plan is a written plan developed by an institution that provides for the equitable treatment of students if an institution, or an institutional location that provides twenty-five percent or more of at least one program, ceases to operate before all students have completed their program of study, and may include, if required by the institution's accrediting agency, a teach-out agreement between institutions. Teach-out plans must be approved by SACSCOC.

Following review and approval of a teach-out plan that includes a program that is accredited by another accrediting agency, SACSCOC will notify that accreditor of its approval.

Teach-out Agreements

A teach-out agreement is a written agreement between institutions that provides for the equitable treatment of students and a reasonable opportunity for students to complete their program of study if an institution, or an institutional location that provides twenty-five percent or more of at least one program offered, ceases to operate before all enrolled students have completed their program of study. Such a teach-out agreement requires SACSCOC approval in advance of implementation.

For approval by SACSCOC, the agreement must

- be with an institution accredited by a
  - U.S. Department of Education recognized institutional accreditor, or
  - non-U.S. institutional accreditor or governmental entity;
- be consistent with applicable standards in the *Principles of Accreditation* and with SACSCOC policies; and
- provide for the equitable treatment of students by ensuring
  - the teach-out institution has the necessary experience, resources, and support services to provide an educational program that is of acceptable quality and reasonably similar in content, structure, and scheduling to that provided by the teach-out institution; and
  - the teach-out institution demonstrates it can provide students access to the program(s) and services without requiring them to move or travel substantial distances.

Closing an Institution without an Agreement

If an institution accredited by SACSCOC closes and is no longer accredited, SACSCOC will seek assistance from the United States Department of Education and appropriate state agencies to help its students find reasonable opportunities to complete their education without additional expense.

Applicant and Candidacy Teach-out Plans

The SACSCOC Board of Trustees has approved additional substantive changes that require notification and, in some cases, approval prior to implementation. When an applicant is authorized a Candidacy Committee, it must submit an institutional contingency teach-out plan as a part of its Candidacy Report to the Candidacy Committee. The plan ensures students completing the teach-out would meet curricular requirements for professional licensure or certification, if any, and must include a list of academic programs offered by the institution and the names of other institutions that offer similar programs that could potentially enter into a teach out agreement with the institution. If the institution does not

receive initial accreditation within two years of becoming a candidate, the institution will remain a candidate upon the condition that only the currently enrolled students have had a reasonable time to complete the activities in its teach-out plan to assist students in transferring or completing their programs, but for no more than 120 days unless approved by SACSCOC Board of Trustees for Good Cause.

■

3. Appendices

Appendix A: What to Submit for Approvals

This appendix provides an enumerated list – an outline – of the required content for each prospectus and teach-out plan requiring SACSCOC Board of Trustees approval prior to implementation. Required content is provided for each type of substantive change requiring approval identified in the Specific Requirements by Type of Change section of this document; the content of this appendix is arranged by the same categories – Institutional Changes, Program Changes, and Off-campus Instructional Site Changes – and in the same order.

Use the enumerated list as the verbatim outline of the prospectus or teach-out plan. Provide the information in the same order the information is listed in this appendix: substantive change readers know exactly what they need to see for a particular substantive change type and where it is expected to be in the prospectus. All listed content is required; do not leave any items unanswered even if the institutional response is "no" or "does not apply" – in those circumstances, provide an explanation.

Prospectuses are limited to 25 pages exclusive of appendices. Make judicious use of appendices by including only information necessary to support the institution's proposed change: volume is not a valid substitute for substance. Moving content to an appendix is acceptable to meet the 25-page limit; Faculty Rosters, for example, may be moved to an appendix as necessary at the institution's discretion. Respect substantive change reviewers' time and professional judgment by providing direct, relevant, and complete information.

Prospectuses must be self-contained. The prospectus may not include materials by reference by linking to an external website. All information proffered by the institution in support of the proposed change must be on file.

Before beginning the prospectus, ensure the guidance and requirements provided in the General Requirements section and in the Procedures section of this document have been thoroughly reviewed and are understood.

Common Content

Many substantive change prospectuses contain the same standard or common content. Rather than listing that content for every substantive change type, the common content is identified here. In the enumerated list of required content by substantive change type, common content is identified and can be copied-and-pasted from this section into the outline for the prospectus.

Common Content A – Background and Context

1. A list of programs offered by the institution (excerpt from the catalog or a printout of a webpage is acceptable).
2. Abstract (one page maximum)
    a. Briefly describe the proposed change to include the intended implementation date.
    b. Provide projected number of students, if applicable.
    c. Indicate the projected life of the change, as applicable: one-time/limited duration or ongoing).
    d. Describe the primary target audience or market.
    e. Describe the strengths of the institution to undertake the change.
3. Describe how the need for the change was determined and how the change was approved by the institution.
4. Describe how the change is consistent with the mission and goals of the institution.
5. Provide documentation of faculty involvement in the planning and approval of the change.
6. Provide evidence of legal authority for the change if approval is required by the governing board or the state.

    Note for reviews subject to approval by the Executive Council: If the change is pending approval by the institution's governing board or by a state board or authority, note the expected approval date. The institution will be contacted at the time of review for evidence of approvals that were pending at the time of submission; do not send approval documentation until requested.

    Note for reviews subject to approval by the full Board of Trustees: Evidence of all required approvals must be included with the original submission; there is no option to submit additional information.

■

Common Content B – Faculty Qualifications

1. Provide a completed Faculty Roster Form to include faculty members scheduled to teach in the proposed substantive change (program, site, arrangement, etc.). Follow the Faculty Roster Form Instructions which require the institution to demonstrate the qualifications of each faculty member to teach the courses assigned (refer to Standard 6.2a (faculty qualifications) of the *Principles of Accreditation*). Use the standard Faculty Roster Form and instructions; do not create a new form or format:
    a. Faculty Roster Form [DOCX]
    b. Faculty Roster Form Instruction [PDF]
2. Include on the Faculty Roster Form all faculty members for the courses *to be taught*; do not include historical teaching assignments unless they are also to be taught in the proposed change.
    a. For a program: list the faculty members for all courses in the curriculum; exclude general education courses, if applicable, unless the general education curriculum is the substantive change being submitted for review.
    b. For an off-campus instructional site: list the faculty members for all courses to be taught at the site for the first 12 months of operation.
3. Do not submit faculty curricula vitae or transcripts.
4. Referring to Standard 6.2a (faculty qualifications):
    a. For a program: demonstrate the institution has at least one faculty member qualified in the discipline to develop the curriculum and/or teach in the program.
    b. For a site: demonstrate the institution has at least one faculty member qualified in the discipline to teach at the site.
5. Provide narrative with supporting evidence to demonstrate the number of full-time faculty members will be adequate to support the proposed change. In addition to at least one faculty member qualified in the discipline, include any to-be-hired faculty members, if applicable, on the Faculty Roster Form (e.g., "To-be-hired #1," "To-be-hired #2," etc.) with the expected qualifications for teaching the courses assigned. Describe the impact on faculty workload of the proposed change.
6. For a graduate program,
    a. demonstrate scholarship and research capability of faculty members teaching in the program and
    b. if applicable, document faculty experience in directing student research or creative work (always applicable for doctoral programs).

■

Common Content C – Resources

Library and Learning/Information Resources

1. List and describe discipline-specific learning resources to support a new program. Do not list all library resources; include only those related to the proposed change. If electronic databases are listed, describe the discipline-specific suites of resources rather than the name only of the database or the consortium through which it is accessed (Such as Galileo, Louis, TexShare, Viva, etc.).
2. Document discipline-specific refereed journals and primary source materials. This is particularly important for graduate programs and especially important for doctoral programs.
3. Describe how students enrolled in a new program, at an off-campus instructional site, or in a distance education program can access discipline-specific library and learning/information resources.
4. Describe how students are made aware of library and learning/information resources available to them, how they can learn how to access the resources and are instructed in the use of online resources, as well as on-site library resources.
5. Describe resources to support students in access to and use of library and learning/information resources.

Student Support Services

1. Describe specific programs, services, and activities which will support students enrolled in the new program and / or enrolled at a new off-campus site /additional location and / or enrolled in distance education programs. Do not list student support services which are not relevant to the specific change.

Physical Resources

1. Describe the adequacy of physical facilities which will support the change.
2. Describe equipment which will be available for a new program or available at a new site.
3. Describe the impact that the proposed change will have on physical facilities and equipment for existing programs and services.

Financial Resources

1. Describe in narrative the financial resources needed to initiate and provide on-going support of the proposed change.
2. Provide a budget for the first year of the proposed change. For a branch campus, provide a three-year budget. Do not provide an institutional budget.

3. Include in the budget resources to be directed to institutions or organizations for contractual or support services for the proposed change.
4. Include projected revenues and expenditures and cash flow for the proposed change.
5. Include a contingency plan should expected revenue does not materialize or should costs exceed estimates.

■

Common Content D – Institutional Evaluation and Assessment Processes

1. Provide a brief description of institutional assessment processes.
2. Describe how the institution will incorporate the proposed change into the institution-wide assessment infrastructure and processes.

■

Institutional Changes

Change in Measure of Student Progress to Completion

☑ Submit a prospectus to include the following:

1. Describe the current measure and the proposed measure of student progress to completion.
2. Describe the rationale for the change.
3. Provide a narrative explanation or a chart illustrating the conversion equivalency between the current method and the proposed method.
4. Demonstrate the proposed method will, for all programs, maintain compliance with the Standard 9.2 (program length) of the *Principles of Accreditation*. Provide equivalencies to semester credit hours, if applicable.
5. Provide evidence the proposed measure is published and accessible to all concerned parties (students, faculty, staff) in compliance with the Standard 9.7 (program requirements) of the *Principles of Accreditation.*
6. Provide evidence the proposed measure is published in institutional policy and accurately reflects how the policy and procedures will be implemented in compliance with Standard 10.1 (academic policies) of the *Principles of Accreditation.*
7. Describe how the institution will determine the amount and level of credit awarded for its courses under the proposed measure regardless of the method of delivery.
8. Describe how the institution will provide oversight of the policy in compliance with the SACSCOC *Credit Hours* policy and with Standard 10.7 (policies for awarding credit) of the *Principles of Accreditation.*

■

Competency-based Education by Course/Credit-based Approach – Institutional-level Approval

☑ Submit a prospectus to include the following:

1. Provide Common Content A – Background and Context, relative to the proposed change.
2. Provide a description of the program or programs that will be taught via credit/course-based competency-based education methodology for the first time.
3. Describe the infrastructure to support credit/course-based competency-based education.
4. Describe how faculty members will be trained in credit/course-based competency-based education and how courses will be developed.
5. Describe technical support for students enrolled in courses delivered by credit/course-based competency-based education and technical support for faculty members.
6. Provide Common Content B – Faculty Qualifications, relative to the proposed change.
7. Provide Common Content C – Resources, relative to the proposed change.
8. Describe how effectiveness of programs offered via credit/course-based competency-based education will be assessed.
9. Provide Common Content D – Institutional Evaluation and Assessment Processes, relative to the proposed change.

■

Distance Education – Institutional-level Approval

☑ Submit a prospectus to include the following:

1. Provide Common Content A – Background and Context, relative to the proposed change.
2. Provide a description of the first program that will be taught 50% or more via distance education.
3. Describe the infrastructure to support distance delivery methods to include the learning management system and the administrative structure the support distance education.
4. Describe how faculty members will be trained in distance delivery methodology and how courses will be developed.
5. Describe technical support for students enrolled in courses delivered by distance methods and technical support for faculty members.
6. Document compliance with Standard 10.6 (distance and correspondence education) of the *Principles of Accreditation*.
7. Document the institution's approval in any state where distance education students may be located.
8. Provide Common Content B – Faculty Qualifications, relative to the proposed change.
9. Provide Common Content C – Resources, relative to the proposed change.
10. Describe how effectiveness of programs offered via distance delivery will be assessed.
11. Provide Common Content D – Institutional Evaluation and Assessment Processes, relative to the proposed change.

■

Institution Closure

☑ Submit a teach-out plan to include the following:

1. Communication
    a. Describe a communication plan to inform students, faculty, staff, and other stakeholders of the institution's closure. The plan
        i. must not rely on a single medium (e.g., email only),
        ii. must be appropriate to each stakeholder,
        iii. must include how it will inform students how to access transcripts, other academic records (such as advising plans), financial records (such as payments due to the institution), and financial aid records (such as loan processors),
        iv. must explain how it will inform students of any additional costs associated with teach-out options, and
        v. must provide copies of all planned communication from the institution to demonstrate the institution is making accurate statements about students' ability to transfer credits to teach-out institutions.
2. Student academic records
    a. Describe a plan to preserve and make available to former students all academic transcripts including validations/confirmations of academic credentials awarded to former students.
    b. Identify the party to whom academic records will be entrusted and include a physical address and contact information.
    c. Identify any state or other governmental agency requirement regarding disposition of academic records.
    d. Describe a plan to inform current and former students how they may request transcript copies.
    e. Include a description of any encumbrances placed on access to academic records such as withholding transcript copies if a former student has an outstanding balance owed *to the institution*, consistent with current federal regulations.
3. Student accounts receivable
    a. Describe a plan to collect outstanding balances owed *to the institution* by students and former students after the closure.
    b. Include a description of how students and former students will be informed of the institution's intention to collect.
4. Refunds and loan discharges
    a. Describe a plan to provide all potentially eligible students with information about how to obtain a closed school discharge and, if applicable, information on State refund policies.
5. Re-employment
    a. Explain how the institution will assist faculty and staff in finding new employment.

6. Programs (report on spreadsheet template; see below)
    a. Provide a list of all academic programs offered by the institution for all credentials (e.g., certificates, diplomas, degrees) and for all instructional levels (associate, baccalaureate, master's, education specialist, or doctoral, as applicable to the institution).
    b. The program list must include for *each* program
        i. at least two teach-out institutions offering comparable programs where students could complete their program of study, and
        ii. for each program / teach-out institution combination,
            1. a statement of assurance that the method of delivery is comparable,
            2. a good faith assessment of the number and types of credits each teach-out institution is willing to accept prior to students' enrollment,
            3. a statement of assurance that the curricular requirements at the teach-out institution meet requirements for professional licensure or certification as applicable to the program,
            4. a statement of assurance that students are not required to move or travel substantial distances or durations with possible exceptions for highly specialized programs, and
            5. the institution's plan to provide a clear statement to students of the tuition and fees of the educational program and the number and types of credits that will be accepted by the teach-out institution.
7. Teach-out institutions (report on spreadsheet template; see below)
    a. Provide a list of all institutions identified as offering comparable programs where students could complete their programs of study to include
        i. the name and web address of each institution,
        ii. the institution's accreditor or accreditor(s),
        iii. a good faith statement of assurance that the institution is in good standing with its institutional accreditor(s), the U.S. Department of Education, and is not under investigation, subject to an action, or being prosecuted for an issue related to academic quality, misrepresentation, fraud, or other severe matters by a law enforcement agency.
8. Students (report on spreadsheet template; see below)
    a. Provide a list of all enrolled students by academic program to include each student's current progress to completion. Student names or other individually identifiable information may be anonymized at the institution's discretion using an identification number or code if the institution can deanonymize (i.e., reidentify) the individual student data if needed.
9. Spreadsheet templates
    a. Information for items 6 (Programs), 7 (Teach-out institutions), and 8 (Students) above must be reported on SACSCOC-provided spreadsheet templates. The templates may be accessed from the substantive change webpage under

"Documents and Templates." Instruction and guidance are provided within the templates.

10. Teach-out agreements
    a. A teach-out agreement is usually required if any significant consideration *other than* the transfer of academic credit is agreed upon between the institution and a teach-out institution. If the teach-out institution is only transferring credit and making no additional consideration for students covered under a teach-out plan, then the institutions are, in essence, executing a transfer articulation agreement and a teach-out agreement is not necessary. Teach-out agreements are subject to approval separate from the approval of the teach-out plan.

■

Institution Relocation

☑ Submit a prospectus to include the following:

1. Provide the current physical address and the proposed (new) physical address.
2. Provide the intended implementation or effective date of the relocation.
3. Describe the rationale and need for the relocation.
4. Provide evidence the relocation has been approved by the institution's governing board and, if required, the state governing board or authority.
5. Describe the planned process for the relocation (e.g., move at one time or phase-in with date of implementation).
6. Provide projected number of students to be impacted.
7. Describe the instructional methods of delivery to be used at the proposed location and if they differ from the current location.
8. Describe the educational programs offered at the current location and programs to be offered at the proposed location, identifying any programs that will not continue to be offered once the institution relocates.
9. Provide narrative with supporting evidence that the number of full-time faculty members at the new location will be adequate to support the mission and goals of the institution.
10. Describe the impact of relocation on library and learning/information resources.
11. Describe the impact of relocation on student support services.
12. Describe the physical facilities of the proposed location and demonstrate how they are adequate to appropriately serve the needs of the institution's educational programs, support services, and other mission-related activities.
13. Describe how the institution will provide a healthy, safe and secure environment for all members of the campus community at the new location.
14. Describe financial resources available for the relocation, including a three-year budget.
15. Provide a contingency plan in the event required resources to fund the relocation do not materialize.
16. Describe the impact of the relocation on the assessment of student learning outcomes for each educational program.
17. Describe the impact of the relocation on the assessment of academic and student services that support student success.

■

Institutional Contingency Teach-out Plan

☑ Submit a teach-out plan to include the following:

1. Communication
    a. Describe a communication plan to inform students, faculty, staff, and other stakeholders of the institution's closure. The plan
        i. must not rely on a single medium (e.g., email only),
        ii. must be appropriate to each stakeholder,
        iii. must include how it will inform students how to access transcripts, other academic records (such as advising plans), financial records (such as payments due to the institution), and financial aid records (such as loan processors),
        iv. must explain how it will inform students of any additional costs associated with teach-out options, and
        v. must provide copies of all planned communication from the institution to demonstrate the institution is making accurate statements about students' ability to transfer credits to teach-out institutions.
2. Student academic records
    a. Describe a plan to preserve and make available to former students all academic transcripts including validations/confirmations of academic credentials awarded to former students.
    b. Identify the party to whom academic records will be entrusted and include a physical address and contact information.
    c. Identify any state or other governmental agency requirement regarding disposition of academic records.
    d. Describe a plan to inform current and former students how they may request transcript copies.
    e. Include a description of any encumbrances placed on access to academic records such as withholding transcript copies if a former student has an outstanding balance owed *to the institution*, consistent with current federal regulations.
3. Student accounts receivable
    a. Describe a plan to collect outstanding balances owed *to the institution* by students and former students after the closure.
    b. Include a description of how students and former students will be informed of the institution's intention to collect.
4. Refunds and loan discharges
    a. Describe a plan to provide all potentially eligible students with information about how to obtain a closed school discharge and, if applicable, information on State refund policies.
5. Re-employment
    a. Explain how the institution will assist faculty and staff in finding new employment.

6. Programs (report on spreadsheet template; see below)
    a. Provide a list of all academic programs offered by the institution for all credentials (e.g., certificates, diplomas, degrees) and for all instructional levels (associate, baccalaureate, master's, education specialist, or doctoral, as applicable to the institution).
    b. The program list must include for *each* program
        i. at least two teach-out institutions offering comparable programs where students could complete their program of study, and
        ii. for each program / teach-out institution combination,
            1. a statement of assurance that the method of delivery is comparable,
            2. a good faith assessment of the number and types of credits each teach-out institution is willing to accept prior to students' enrollment,
            3. a statement of assurance that the curricular requirements at the teach-out institution meet requirements for professional licensure or certification as applicable to the program,
            4. a statement of assurance that students are not required to move or travel substantial distances or durations with possible exceptions for highly specialized programs, and
            5. the institution's plan to provide a clear statement to students of the tuition and fees of the educational program and the number and types of credits that will be accepted by the teach-out institution.
7. Teach-out institutions (report on spreadsheet template; see below)
    a. Provide a list of all institutions identified as offering comparable programs where students could complete their programs of study to include
        i. the name and web address of each institution,
        ii. the institution's accreditor or accreditor(s),
        iii. a good faith statement of assurance that the institution is in good standing with its institutional accreditor(s), the U.S. Department of Education, and is not under investigation, subject to an action, or being prosecuted for an issue related to academic quality, misrepresentation, fraud, or other severe matters by a law enforcement agency.
8. Students (report on spreadsheet template; see below)
    a. Provide a list of all enrolled students by academic program to include each student's current progress to completion. Student names or other individually identifiable information may be anonymized at the institution's discretion using an identification number or code if the institution can deanonymize (i.e., reidentify) the individual student data if needed.
9. Spreadsheet templates
    a. Information for items 6 (Programs), 7 (Teach-out institutions), and 8 (Students) above must be reported on SACSCOC-provided spreadsheet templates. The templates may also be accessed from the substantive change webpage under

"Documents and Templates." Instruction and guidance are provided within the templates.

10. Teach-out agreements (optional at the institution's discretion)
    a. A teach-out agreement is usually required if any significant consideration *other than* the transfer of academic credit is agreed upon between the institution and a teach-out institution. If the teach-out institution is only transferring credit and making no additional consideration for students covered under a teach-out plan, then the institutions are, in essence, executing a transfer articulation agreement and a teach-out agreement is not necessary. Teach-out agreements are subject to approval separate from the approval of the teach-out plan.

■

Mission Change

☑ Submit a prospectus to include the following:

1. Provide the current mission statement.
2. Provide the proposed mission statement.
3. Provide the intended implementation or effective date of the change.
4. Provide evidence of the institution's governing board approval of the mission change
5. Describe the impetus and rationale for the mission change.
6. Assess the impact on the number and mix of programs in the institution's portfolio.
7. Assess the impact on the number and composition of the institution's faculty in the short- and long-term.
8. Assess the impact on staff members.
9. Describe the impact on the non-academic operations of the institutions, e.g., business services, facilities and maintenance, intercollegiate athletics, etc.
10. Describe the current financial stability of the institution.
11. Assess the financial impact of the mission change.
12. Describe any expected, forthcoming substantive change because of (not concurrent with) the mission change, e.g., new program prospectuses, off-campus instructional site prospectuses, level change application, etc.

■

Level Authorization Addition

☑ Submit a prospectus to include the following:

1. Provide the intended implementation date.
2. Provide the level authorization for which the institution is seeking approval; i.e., what instruction and credential level is the institution seeking to add authorization to offer: I (associate), II (baccalaureate), III (masters), or IV (specialist). Indicate one only.
3. Provide the program or programs to be offered in the first year of implementation at the new authorization level. For each program, provide the credential (e.g., Associate of Arts, Master of Education, etc.) *and* the discipline (e.g., Mechatronics, Early Childhood Education, etc.).
4. Provide Common Content A – Background and Context, relative to the proposed change.
5. Describe the institution's
    a. assessment of the level authorization's impact on the institution's capacity to support the level's program(s) instruction, students and student support services, library/learning and information resources, faculty, and other affected institutional capacities, and
    b. how the institution will manage the impact of the level authorization while maintain compliance with the *Principles of Accreditation* and SACSCOC policies.
6. Separately, for *each* program identified in the item above:
    a. Provide the curriculum for the entire program.
    b. Provide program-specific goals (objectives) and specific student learning outcomes for the program.
    c. Describe how the student learning outcomes for the program will be assessed.
    d. Provide course descriptions for all courses in the proposed program. Do not provide syllabi or catalogs (though course description *excerpts* from a catalog are acceptable).
    e. Describe admissions and graduation requirements for the program.
    f. Provide the planned method(s) of delivery, as defined in policy, of the program.
    g. Provide the planned location(s) at which the program will be delivered, i.e., on-campus and/or at specific off-campus instructional site(s). (Providing this information does not replace submitting a notification or prospectus for approval, if necessary, of an off-campus instructional site as required by policy.)
    h. Demonstrate compliance with Standard 10.7 (policies for awarding credit) of the *Principles of Accreditation*.
    i. Describe administrative oversight to ensure the quality of the program.
    j. For a program offered in compressed time frames, describe the methodology for determining that levels of knowledge and competencies comparable to those required in the traditional formats have been achieved.
    k. Provide Common Content B – Faculty Qualifications, relative to the proposed change.
    l. Provide Common Content C – Resources, relative to the proposed change.
    m. Provide Common Content D – Institutional Evaluation and Assessment Processes, relative to the proposed change.

Level Change to a Higher Level

Note: Some items in the level change to a higher level prospectus are associated with one or more of the *Principles of Accreditation.* These items are noted by including the standard number and description and followed by "[CR]" if the standard is a core requirement. The institution's responses to these items are evaluated, in part, relative to the expectation of compliance with the standard when the level change is implemented.

☑ Submit a prospectus to include the following:

1. Provide a current, completed *Institutional Summary Form Prepared for SACSCOC Reviews*.
2. Program information
    a. Provide the program or programs to be offered at the higher level. For each program, provide the credential and the discipline; e.g., Bachelor of Science in Physics, Master of Fine Arts in Digital Arts, Doctor of Philosophy in Genomics, etc. Avoid using abbreviations only. *Note*: Only programs or coursework submitted for review at the new level will be included in the Board of Trustees' action.
    b. Provide the locations where the program will be offered. If the proposed programs/courses will be offered at off-campus instructional sites, list each site and address as currently on record at SACSCOC, the mode of delivery, and the percentage of the program that will be offered at each site. *Note:* Sites offering 25% or more of a program should be on record at SACSCOC at the time of the level change application submission. If more than 50% of a program will be offered at a site, the site must be approved separate from the level change. Including an instructional site in the level change prospectus -- whether for a site subject to notification (offering 25-49% of a program) or for a site subject to approval (offering 50% or more of a program -- does not relieve an institution of its obligation to submit notification or secure approval for a site as warranted. Sites offering less than 25% of the program should be reported for this item but there is no separate off-campus instructional site notification or approval obligation.
3. General institutional and program information
    a. Provide the name of the agency or entity that has legally authorized the institution to provide instruction and credentials at the new level.
    b. Document the charter, letter of authorization, or letter of approval from the appropriate agency or organization indicating the institution may offer instruction and credentials at the new level. Board minutes indicating approval are acceptable documentation; board minutes that do not indicate approval and board agendas are not acceptable documentation. All required documentation must be included with the prospectus at the time of submission; supplemental or piecemeal submission of documentation is not possible.

c. Provide the date the institution intends to enroll the first students at the higher level.
d. Provide the projected date the first students will graduate from a program at the higher level.

4. Enrollment information
   a. Referring to your most recently completed SACSCOC Institutional Profile, provide the following enrollments (headcounts) for the institution for the most recent fall term:
      i. The year for which this fall term data is reported
      ii. Full-time undergraduate students
      iii. Full-time post-baccalaureate students
      iv. For-credit part-time undergraduate students
      v. For-credit part-time post-baccalaureate students
      vi. Non-credit course enrollment students
      vii. Total headcount (sum of the five preceding items)
   b. Provide the following projected enrollments (headcounts) for the new program(s) at the proposed higher level:
      i. Full-time students
      ii. Part-time students
      iii. Non-credit students
      iv. Total projected headcount (sum of the three preceding items)
5. Describe the rationale for the new program(s) including an assessment of need.
6. Financial resources
   a. Provide a budget for the new program(s) to include revenues and expenses for the first three years of operation. (Standard 13.1: Financial resources [CR] and Standard 13.3: Financial responsibility)
   b. Provide a copy of the full financial statement audit from the most recent audited fiscal year. (Standard 13.2: Financial documents [CR])
7. In response to the following selected standards, explain how the institution will maintain compliance relative to the proposed level change and new program(s) at the new level:
   a. Standard 2.1: Institutional mission [CR]. The institution has a clearly defined, comprehensive, and published mission specific to the institution and appropriate for higher education. The mission addresses teaching and learning and, where applicable, research and public service.
      As part of the response, clarify that the mission statement is inclusive of the expansion to a new program(s) at a higher level.
   b. Standard 5.4: Qualified administrative/academic officers. The institution employs and regularly evaluates administrative and academic officers with appropriate experience and qualifications to lead the institution.
   c. Standard 6.2.a: Faculty qualifications. For each of its educational programs, the institution justifies and documents the qualifications of its faculty members.
      i. Provide faculty qualifications on the Faculty Roster Form [DOCX]. Use the standard Faculty Roster Form and instructions [PDF]; do not create a

new form or format. Limit entries to those faculty members assigned to the new program(s).

ii. For graduate programs, provide documentation of the scholarship and research capabilities of faculty.

iii. For doctoral programs, provide documentation of faculty experience in directing dissertation research.

d. Standard 6.2.b: Program faculty. For each of its educational programs, the institution employs a sufficient number of full-time faculty members to ensure curriculum and program quality, integrity, and review.

i. The narrative should only address the impact of the program expansion (new programs and affected existing programs – e.g., include information on the impact of staffing at the lower degree level(s) in related fields of study).

ii. Describe the impact of the program expansion on faculty workload.

iii. Provide a list of newly hired faculty to support this initiative.

e. Standard 6.2.c: Program coordination. For each of its educational programs, the institution assigns appropriate responsibility for program coordination. The narrative should only address the new programs.

f. Standard 8.2.a: Student outcomes: educational programs. The institution identifies expected outcomes, assesses the extent to which it achieves these outcomes, and provides evidence of seeking improvement based on analysis of the results in student learning outcomes for each of its educational programs.

i. Explain how the institution is monitoring the quality of the new program(s).

ii. Summarize current procedures for the assessment of learning outcomes and achievement, and how results are being or will be used to improve the new programs.

iii. Include relevant information about existing related programs that may serve as indicators of the institutional effectiveness process that apply to the new program(s).

g. Standard 9.1: Program content [CR]. Educational programs (a) embody a coherent course of study, (b) are compatible with the stated mission and goals of the institution, and (c) are based upon fields of study appropriate to higher education. The narrative should address the new program(s) only.

h. Standard 9.2: Program length [CR]. The institution offers one or more degree programs based on at least 60 semester credit hours or the equivalent at the associate level; at least 120 semester credit hours or the equivalent at the baccalaureate level; or at least 30 semester credit hours or the equivalent at the post-baccalaureate, graduate, or professional level. The institution provides an explanation of equivalencies when using units other than semester credit hours. The institution provides an appropriate justification for all degree programs and combined degree programs that include fewer than the required number of

semester credit hours or its equivalent unit.
The narrative should address the new program(s) only.

i. Standard 9.4: Institutional credits for an undergraduate degree. At least 25 percent of the credit hours required for an undergraduate degree are earned through instruction offered by the institution awarding the degree.
Address Standard 9.4 only if the institution is moving from Level I to Level II.

j. Standard 9.5: Institutional credits for a graduate/professional degree. At least one-third of the credit hours required for a graduate or a post-baccalaureate professional degree are earned through instruction offered by the institution awarding the degree.
Address Standard 9.5 only if the level change involves programs at the graduate-level.

k. Standard 9.6: Post-baccalaureate rigor and curriculum. Post-baccalaureate professional degree programs and graduate degree programs are progressively more advanced in academic content than undergraduate programs, and are structured (a) to include knowledge of the literature of the discipline and (b) to ensure engagement in research and/or appropriate professional practice and training.
Address Standard 9.6 only if the level change includes graduate programs

l. Standard 9.7: Program requirements. The institution publishes requirements for its undergraduate, graduate, and post-baccalaureate professional programs, as applicable. The requirements conform to commonly accepted standards and practices for degree programs.
The narrative should only address the new programs.

m. Standard 10.4: Academic governance. The institution (a) publishes and implements policies on the authority of faculty in academic and governance matters, (b) demonstrates that educational programs for which academic credit is awarded are approved consistent with institutional policy, and (c) places primary responsibility for the content, quality, and effectiveness of the curriculum with its faculty.
The narrative should only address the new programs.

n. Standard 10.5: Admissions policies and practices. The institution: (a) publishes admissions policies consistent with its mission; (b) ensures that its recruitment materials and presentations accurately represent the institution's practices, policies, and accreditation status; and (c) ensures that independent contractors or agents used for recruiting purposes and for admission activities are governed by the same principles and policies as institutional employees.
The narrative should only address the new programs.

o. Standard 10.7: Policies for awarding credit. The institution publishes and implements policies for determining the amount and level of credit awarded for its courses, regardless of format or mode of delivery. These policies require oversight by persons academically qualified to make the necessary judgments. In

educational programs not based on credit hours (e.g., direct assessment programs), the institution has a sound means for determining credit equivalencies.

p. Standard 10.8: Evaluating and awarding external academic credit. The institution publishes policies for evaluating, awarding and accepting credit not originating from the institution. The institution ensures (a) the academic quality of any credit or coursework recorded on its transcript, (b) an approval process with oversight by persons academically qualified to make the necessary judgments, and (c) the credit awarded is comparable to a designated credit experience and is consistent with the institution's mission.
   Emphasize aspects of this standard that may have special relevance to the program expansion at the new degree level.
q. Standard 11.1: Library and learning/information resources [CR]. The institution provides adequate and appropriate library and learning/information resources, services, and support for its mission.
   The narrative should only address the new programs.
r. Standard 11.3: Library and learning/information access. The institution provides (a) student and faculty access and user privileges to its library services and (b) access to regular and timely instruction in the use of the library and other learning/information resources.
s. Standard 12.1: Student support services [CR]. The institution provides appropriate academic and student support programs, services, and activities consistent with its mission.
   The narrative should address the appropriateness of student support services available to students at the new degree level.
t. Standard 12.4: Student complaints. The institution (a) publishes appropriate and clear procedures for addressing written student complaints, (b) demonstrates that it follows the procedures when resolving them, and (c) maintains a record of student complaints that can be accessed upon request by SACSCOC.
u. Standard 13.7: Physical resources. The institution ensures adequate physical facilities and resources, both on and off campus, that appropriately serve the needs of the institution's educational programs, support services, and other mission-related activities.
   The narrative should emphasize facilities relevant to the new program(s).

■

Prison Education Program – Institutional-level Approval

☑ Submit a prospectus to include the following:

1. Common Content A – Background and Context, as defined in the substantive change policy, relative to the proposed prison education program.
2. A copy of a signed final written agreement between the institution and the oversight entity (or entities) responsible for the facilities where confined or incarcerated students are located addressing all requirements stipulated in Part 668.236 of the federal regulations, including,
    a. the oversight entity's approval of the institution to operate in its facilities;
    b. the oversight entity's approval of the programs to be offered in its facilities with programs identified by name to include, for each, credential (e.g., Associate of Arts, certificate, diploma, etc.) and discipline (e.g., Dental Hygiene, Medical Office Management, Web Development, etc.);
    c. how the oversight entity will determine, after the initial two-year approval, that the programs operating in its facilities are in the best interest of students;
    d. assurance of transferability of credits to at least one other institution for each program identified above;
    e. programs to be offered satisfy professional licensure or certification requirement, if applicable;
    f. programs to be offered do not prohibit licensure or employment of formerly incarcerated individuals, if applicable; and
    g. acknowledgement that PEP programs and sites must be taught-out and closed by the institution if the institution is subject to adverse action by SACSCOC.
3. Evidence of an effective methodology developed and implemented by the institution to establish the prison education program, in collaboration with the oversight entity (or entities), meets the same standards as substantially similar programs delivered to non-prison education program students. The methodology *may* include PEP versus non-PEP similarity evaluations of
    a. academic advising;
    b. academic policies such as grade appeals, conditions for continued enrollment, program completion time limits, student codes of conduct, etc.;
    c. access to appropriate library / learning and information resources;
    d. access to learning and student support services;
    e. admission requirements;
    f. career services;
    g. curricula;
    h. faculty qualifications;
    i. student learning outcomes; and
    j. other measures or evidence at the institution's and the oversight entity's discretion.

■

Program Changes

Clock-Credit Hour Conversion

☑ Submit a prospectus to include the following:

1. The name of the program.
2. The credential of the program (e.g., associate of applied science, certificate, etc.).
3. The instructional level of the program (associate, baccalaureate, master's, education specialist, or doctoral, if not apparent from the credential).
4. The effective date of the change.
5. Description of the conversion: clock hours to credit hours or credit hours to clock hours.
6. Explain the motivation and rationale for the change.
7. Demonstrate the equivalency between the current measure and the proposed measure and the formula used to make the conversion.
8. Demonstrate the conversion will not negatively impact student learning outcomes.
9. Demonstrate the conversion will not negatively impact expected time to completion.
10. Assess the change relative to the requirements in the SACSCOC *Credit Hours* policy.

■

Competency-based Education by Direct Assessment – Approval

☑ Submit a prospectus to include the following:

1. Program Information
    a. Provide Common Content A – Background and Context, relative to the proposed change.
    b. Explain how the program meets the policy-defined characteristics of a competency-based education program by direct assessment versus a competency-based education program by course/credit-based approach.
    c. Provide the curriculum for the program, including a description of each competency. The curriculum must include
        i. all competencies required to be demonstrated to complete the program,
        ii. a description of each competency,
        iii. the sequence through which competencies will be completed.
    d. Provide the program's student learning outcomes if different from the program's competencies. For example, student learning outcomes may be individual competencies and/or clusters of related competencies.
    e. Demonstrate how the curriculum
        i. creates a coherent program of study in the discipline, and
        ii. represents teaching and learning at the program's intended instructional level, i.e., teaching at learning at the associate, baccalaureate, master's, specialist, or doctoral level.
    f. Explain how the program's competencies are related to or derived from external standards, i.e., industry or licensure standards. If competencies are not related to or derived from external standards, explain the method or process by which the program's competencies were identified and defined.
    g. Identify the method(s) of delivery by which the program's instruction will be delivered (face-to-face, distance education, etc.).
    h. Explain how students will engage in regular and substantive interaction with the faculty.
    i. Provide the planned location(s) at which the program will be delivered, i.e., on-campus and/or at specific off-campus instructional site(s). (Providing this information does not replace submitting a notification or prospectus for approval, if necessary, of an off-campus instructional site as required by policy.)
2. Institutional Support and Practices
    a. Describe admissions and graduation requirements for the program.
    b. Document that recruitment materials are clear and comprehensive; include the structure and expectations of the program, tuition and fees, and academic policies, etc.
    c. If the institution engages a contractor to provide services for a direct assessment program, provide the complete, fully executed agreement with contact information for both parties. (See Cooperative Academic Agreements in the SACSCOC *Substantive Change Policies and Procedures*.)

d. Demonstrate compliance with Standard 10.7 (policies for awarding credit) of the *Principles of Accreditation*. Include the methodology used to determine the credit hour equivalence of the direct assessment measures.
e. Explain
    i. how many attempts a student is given to demonstrate mastery of a competency, and
    ii. what happens if a student fails to achieve mastery of a competency (e.g., options for academic support, remedial instruction, etc.).
f. Describe administrative oversight to ensure the quality of the program. Include qualifications of person(s) directly responsible for administrative oversight on the Faculty Roster.
g. Describe how tuition and fees are determined based on the institution's contribution to the development or formation of the student's knowledge and skills.
h. Describe and explain special arrangements for the direct assessment program (in contrast to non-direct assessment programs) for
    i. course grades or grade equivalents;
    ii. institutional policies on satisfactory academic standing, i.e., academic warnings or probations;
    iii. recording competencies on academic transcripts;
    iv. transfer policies, e.g., accepting previously completed traditional course credit hours as satisfying a direct assessment program's defined competency or competencies, prohibiting credit transfer, etc.; and
    v. withdrawal and refund policies.
i. Provide a statement of assurance and evidence for each of the following that the institution:
    i. assists students in seeking title IV student aid funds for those courses, modules or components of the academic program that the institution contributes to the development or formation of the student's mastery of competencies;
    ii. has policies and procedures to address the disbursement of financial aid, and tuition charges and refunds;
    iii. has the option to charge a reasonable fee for its assessment of a student's prior learning used to satisfy one or more competencies required in the program's curriculum and the transcription of those competencies; and
    iv. will charge tuition only for those courses, modules, components, and services that the institution contributes to the development or formation of the student or for the term in which the student is enrolled in the direct assessment program.

3. Assessment
    a. Describe how the competencies will be developed and assessed and by whom (include these person(s) on the Faculty Roster with their qualifications)
    b. Describe how student mastery of each competency will be determined.
    c. Describe the methodology for determining that levels of knowledge and competencies are comparable to those required in the traditional formats (for general education and disciplinary courses, if applicable).

   d. Describe how faculty members will be trained in competency-based direct assessment.
   e. Provide Common Content D – Institutional Evaluation and Assessment Processes, relative to the proposed change. Describe how effectiveness of the program(s) offered via competency-based direct assessment will be assessed.

4. Faculty and Other Resources
   a. Provide Common Content B – Faculty Qualifications, relative to the proposed change. Substitute individual competencies or sets of related competencies for courses. The Faculty Roster must clearly demonstrate a faculty member's qualification to teach the competencies to which they are assigned.
   b. Provide Common Content C – Resources, relative to the proposed change.
   c. Describe technical support available to students and faculty engaged in this competency-based direct assessment program.

■

Cooperative Academic Arrangement with Non-Title IV Entities – Approval

☑ Submit a prospectus to include the following:

1. The program or programs for which the entity/entities will provide academic content.
2. The rationale for entering into the agreement.
3. A description of the expected benefits to (a) the students and (b) the institution.
4. The name and contact information for at least one person at the institution and at each participating entity.
5. Demonstrate the institution's determination that the entity or entities in the agreement are non-title IV entities for the purpose of substantive change as provided in the *Cooperative Academic Arrangements Definitions and Guidelines* section of this policy.
6. A statement of the institution's intent for students enrolled in the program(s) covered under the agreement to be eligible to receive title IV federal financial aid including the portion of each program or programs that will be eligible.
    a. If the intent is for students to receive title IV aid,
        i. demonstrate the institution has assessed and reached a good-faith conclusion of the program(s) title IV eligibility under the terms of the agreement, and
        ii. if any portion of any program or programs will not be eligible for title IV aid, demonstrate the institution's plan to communicate this information to the affected students prior to initial matriculation and to any other impacted party/parties.
    b. If the intent is students will not receive title IV aid, demonstrate the institution's plan to communicate this information to the affected students prior to initial matriculation and to any other impacted party/parties.
7. Provide Common Content B – Faculty Qualifications, relative to the proposed change.
8. A copy of a signed and dated written agreement amongst all parties to include:
    a. roles and responsibilities of all parties,
    b. a description of the regularly scheduled evaluation process to validate quality and integrity of the content,
    c. a description of the regularly scheduled review and approval by all parties of course content and, as warranted, program curricula,
    d. assessment of student learning outcomes and acceptable thresholds of demonstrated student learning,
    e. statements that
        i. SACSCOC accreditation does not extend to the non-SACSCOC entities and
        ii. the SACSCOC institution is responsible for ensuring compliance by the participating entity/entities, and
    f. provisions for the regular review of the agreement including renewal and termination of the agreement.

■

Joint Academic Award with non-SACSCOC Institution(s) or Entity(ies)

☑ Submit a prospectus to include the following:

1. For each partner institution participating in the joint academic award, provide
    a. the full legal institution name,
    b. the institution's web (internet) address,
    c. the names and contact information of the principal parties at the institution (this may be included in the memorandum of agreement; see also below), and
    d. the institution's institutional accreditor and a statement that the accreditor either is or is not a U.S. Department of Education (USDE) recognized accreditor.
2. For each partnering institution accredited by USDE recognized institutional accreditor, document each institution is not on public sanction by the accreditor.
3. The joint academic award to be granted to include the
    a. credential (e.g., Graduate Certificate, Master of Science, Doctor of Philosophy, etc.) and
    b. program name (to indicate the discipline, e.g., Food Safety, Data Analytics, Neuroscience, etc.).
4. The instructional level of the program (associate, baccalaureate, master's, education specialist, or doctoral) if not obvious from the credential.
5. A plan and process created by the SACSCOC-accredited institution to ensure the partnership does not imply or create the appearance that SACSCOC accreditation extends to non-SACSCOC accredited partner institutions through representation in academic publications, news or other media releases, promotional materials, student transcripts, verifications of credentials awarded, or other communications or media.
6. A copy of a dated and signed final agreement between or amongst all partnering institutions to include terms, scope, and roles and responsibilities of *each* institution as they relate to the joint academic award. The agreement must include
    a. the credential (e.g., Graduate Certificate, Master of Science, Doctor of Philosophy, etc.) and program name (to indicate the discipline, e.g., Food Safety, Data Analytics, Neuroscience, etc.) of the joint academic award;
    b. if a blanket agreement is in place amongst institutions that allows for additional joint academic awards to be subsequently added but the specific credential and discipline of a new award are not included, an acknowledgement that the institution will submit an updated final signed agreement or a final signed codicil or amendment to the existing agreement.;
    c. an acknowledgement that the non-SACSCOC accredited institution(s) will include the following statement, verbatim, in any materials describing the joint academic award and the relationship between its institution and the SACSCOC-accredited institution:
        i. "[SACSCOC-accredited institution name] is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC). [Non-SACSCOC accredited institution name] is not accredited by SACSCOC. The SACSCOC accreditation of [SACSCOC-accredited institution name] does not extend to or include [non-SACSCOC accredited institution name]. However, the [joint program name] is jointly

awarded by all participating institutions: [list all participating institution's names]. All participating institutions are responsible for all aspects of the program. The [joint program name] is included in [SACSCOC-accredited institution name]'s scope of accreditation.

ii. an acknowledgement that the non-SACSCOC accredited institution(s) are prohibited from using the trademarked
    1. SACSCOC "flame" logo, and
    2. SACSCOC Stamp of Accreditation.

7. Describe the program curriculum and graduation requirements.
8. Provide course descriptions for all courses in the program (independent of which participating institution(s) is delivering instruction).
9. Document the institution meets provisions of Standard 10.9 (cooperative academic arrangements) of the *Principles of Accreditation*, if applicable to the joint academic award.
10. Document how the institution considers and awards transfer credit from another institution, as applicable to the joint academic award.
11. Describe the institution's plan to monitor and ensure that the quality of contributions made by the partner institution(s) meets SACSCOC expectations.
12. Describe how courses and other program requirements will be transcripted and which institution(s) will maintain the official academic transcript.
13. Describe the institution's plan to award a single credential or diploma bearing the imprints and signatures of the officers of each participating institution. Demonstrate how the institution will represent, via the diploma and transcript, that the academic credential was jointly award by multiple institutions.
14. If one or more partnering institution is not accredited by a USDE-recognized accreditor, provide the following additional information:
    a. A description of
        i. any external governmental or accrediting agency approval for the institution(s) or program(s) involved in the agreement, excluding the SACSCOC institution(s);
        ii. the process of quality assurance used by the agency granting this approval; and
        iii. any required legal or licensing approvals.
    b. Documentation that faculty involved in the collaboration are qualified to teach assigned components or courses and a description of the means by the SACSCOC-accredited institution(s) will monitor these qualifications.
    c. Common Content B – Faculty Qualifications, relative to the joint academic award.
    d. Documentation of the physical resources and learning resources contributed by the institution(s) not accredited by a USDE-recognized accreditor.
15. A statement affirming the institution's obligations to comply with the *Institutional Obligations for Public Disclosure* policy as it applies to the joint academic award.
16. The intended implementation date.

■

Method of Delivery – Approval

☑ Submit a prospectus to include the following:

1. The name of the program (to indicate the discipline).
2. The credential to be awarded (e.g., Associate of Arts, Master of Accounting).
3. The instructional level (associate, baccalaureate, master's, education specialist, or doctoral, if not obvious from the credential).
4. The method of delivery to be added: competency-based education, distance education, or face-to-face instruction.
5. The intended implementation date.
6. If the institution is on SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE RESTRICTION, provide an assessment of the impact of the addition of a method of delivery relative to the reason the institution is on SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE RESTRICTION.
7. Demonstrate the addition of a method of delivery will not negatively impact student learning outcomes, student support services, library and learning/information resources, or institutional financial stability.
8. If the institution is seeking method of delivery approval due to its participation in the federal Prison Education Program, include the institution's SACSCOC PEP approval date and case identification (Case ID).

Reminder: Method of delivery approval is required only for institutions on SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE RESTRICTION and for institutions already approved by SACSCOC for Prison Education Programs (PEPs) that are adding, for the first time, a method of delivery not previously used in its PEPs.

■

New Program – Approval

☑ Submit a prospectus to include the following:

1. Provide Common Content A – Background and Context, relative to the proposed change.
2. Provide the curriculum for the entire program.
~~3. Provide a projected schedule of course offerings for the program~~
~~4.~~3. Provide program-specific goals (objectives) and specific student learning outcomes for the program.
~~5.~~4. Describe how the student learning outcomes for the program will be assessed.
~~6.~~5. Provide course descriptions for all courses in the proposed program. Do not provide syllabi or catalogs (though course description *excerpts* from a catalog are acceptable).
~~7.~~6. Describe admissions and graduation requirements for the program.
~~8.~~7. Provide the planned method(s) of delivery, as defined in policy, of the program.
~~9.~~8. Provide the planned location(s) at which the program will be delivered, i.e., on-campus and/or at specific off-campus instructional site(s). (Providing this information does not replace submitting a notification or prospectus for approval, if necessary, of an off-campus instructional site as required by policy.)
~~10.~~9. Demonstrate compliance with Standard 10.7 (policies for awarding credit) of the *Principles of Accreditation*.
~~11.~~10. Describe administrative oversight to ensure the quality of the program.
~~12.~~11. For a program offered in compressed time frames, describe the methodology for determining that levels of knowledge and competencies comparable to those required in the traditional formats have been achieved.
~~13.~~12. Provide Common Content B – Faculty Qualifications, relative to the proposed change.
~~14.~~13. Provide Common Content C – Resources, relative to the proposed change.
~~15.~~14. Provide Common Content D – Institutional Evaluation and Assessment Processes, relative to the proposed change.

■

Program Closure

☑ Submit a teach-out plan to include the following:

1. Provide the closure date, defined by SACSCOC as the date when students are no longer *admitted*.
2. Provide a communication plan to inform all affected parties of the closure to include
    a. how each of the following will be informed for the closure:
        i. currently enrolled students,
        ii. students with lapsed enrollment (i.e., not currently enrolled but recently enrolled), and
        iii. prospective students.
    b. how faculty and staff will be informed, viz., admissions and recruiting / marketing staffs; and
    c. how community or industry partners will be informed. If not applicable, provide an affirmative statement to that effect.
3. If the institution is providing options for students to complete at another institution(s), provide copies of all planned communication from the institution and from the teach-out institution(s) related to the closure. All communication must demonstrate the institutions are making accurate statements about students' ability to transfer credits to the teach-out institution(s) and disclose tuition, fees, and other costs at the teach-out institution(s).
4. An explanation of how all affected students will be helped to complete their programs of study with minimal disruption or additional costs.
5. An explanation of whether the students subject to the teach-out plan will incur additional charges or other expenses because of the teach-out and, if so, how the students will be notified.
6. Copies of signed teach-out agreements with other institutions, if applicable.
7. A description of how faculty and staff will be redeployed or helped to find new employment.

Note: Do not submit individually identifiable student information.

■

Program Designed for Prior Learning – Approval

☑ Submit a prospectus to include the following:

1. The name of the program (to include the program's discipline).
2. The credential to be awarded (e.g., Bachelor of Applied Science, Master of Professional Studies, etc.).
3. The program's instructional level (associate, baccalaureate, master's, education specialist, or doctoral, if not obvious from the credential).
4. The intended implementation date.
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 participate 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. Demonstrate compliance with Standard 10.7 (Policies for awarding credit) for the *Principles of Accreditation*.
8. Provide specific programmatic goals (objectives) and specific student learning outcomes for the program.
9. Provide course descriptions for all courses in the proposed program (do not provide syllabi).
10. Describe administrative oversight to ensure the quality of the program.
11. For a program offered in compressed time frames, describe the methodology for determining that levels of knowledge and competencies comparable to those required in the traditional formats have been achieved.
12. Provide Common Content B – Faculty Qualifications, relative to the proposed change.
13. Provide Common Content C – Resources, relative to the proposed change.
14. Provide Common Content D – Institutional Evaluation and Assessment Processes, relative to the proposed change.
15. An assessment of the impact of the addition of a program designed for prior learning relative to the reason the institution is on SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE RESTRICTION.

Reminder: A program designed for prior learning approval is required only for institutions on SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE RESTRICTION.

■

Program Length Change

☑ Submit a prospectus to include the following:

1. Provide a description of the program.
2. Provide the intended implementation date.
3. Identify which condition describes this program; i.e., why the program length change is being submitted for approval (indicate one only):
    a. the program's length is changing by 25% or more –AND– students' expected time to completion is changing by more than one term ~~or more~~;
    b. the institution is on SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE RESTRICTION –AND– the program's length is changing by 25% or more; or
    c. the institution is seeking approval as an exception to policy-defined criteria to meet federal requirement that limit program length for some gainful employment programs.
4. Describe the rationale for the increase or decrease in program length.
5. Describe how the change was approved by the institution.
6. Describe how the faculty participated in the review and approval of the planned change.
7. Provide a 'before' and 'after' comparison of the curriculum.
8. Describe changes in student learning outcomes because of the program length change.
9. Provide an analysis of the impact of the change in student learning outcomes.
10. For a decrease in program length, explain how program quality and integrity are maintained with fewer credit hours and/or a shorter time-to-completion.
11. Provide an explanation of the impact on students' time-to-completion.
12. Provide an explanation of the financial impact to students.
13. Provide an explanation of the impact on staffing and faculty workloads.

■

Commented [KS7]: Corrects an inconsistency between the criterion as referenced here vs. the Program Length Change section of the procedures. Confirmed the Board's intent in the record of the 2020 policy revision task force.

Off-campus Instructional Site / Additional Location Changes

Off-campus Instructional Site Approval (including branch campus) by Extensive Review

☑ Submit a prospectus to include the following:

1. If multiple sites are proposed in a consolidated prospectus (see qualifying criteria), address each site separately, viz., the description of the physical resources and a Faculty Roster Form separated by site.
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. The intended implementation date.
5. Indicate if the site will be a branch campus.
6. If the site will be a branch campus, demonstrate the site will meet each of the following criteria:
    a. The site is geographically apart from an institution's main campus.
    b. Instruction is delivered at the site.
    c. The site is permanent.
    d. The site offers courses in educational programs leading to a degree, diploma, certificate, or other for-credit credential.
    e. The site has its own faculty and administrative or supervisory organization.
    f. The site has its own budgetary and hiring authority.

For the institutional level review –

7. The institution must demonstrate, at an institutional level, the capacity to effectively oversee and provide ongoing support for off-campus instructional sites / additional locations (including branch campuses, as applicable), by the following:
    a. Demonstrating how the institution will have administrative oversight of off-campus instructional sites / additional locations that ensures academic control of all off-campus instructional sites.
    b. Demonstrating how the institution will have academic assessment and evaluation processes that include the regular and robust assessment and evaluation of each of the institution's off-campus instructional sites / additional locations.
    c. Demonstrating how the institution will engage in ongoing and thorough long-range planning processes for expansion of instructional and other services to off-campus instructional sites / additional locations.
    d. Demonstrating financial resources and financial stability by submitting for review the institution's two most recent financial statement audits.

    Note: *As part of the extensive review, the SACSCOC Board of Trustees will review the institution's audits and SACSCOC financial responsibility score based on financial data submitted by the institution as part of its annual financial profile. If it is not satisfied with the institution's financial stability, the SACSCOC Board of Trustee may deny approval.*

For the site-specific review –

8. Provide Common Content A – Background and Context, relative to the proposed change.
9. Describe the educational program(s) to be offered at the site. If a program to be offered at the site is a new program requiring approval, also provide the prospectus information for New Program – Approval.
10. Provide documentation of approval to operate in the state where the site is located if the site is outside of the state of the institution's main campus (in addition to the state approval evidence in Common Content A).
11. Provide the course schedule and course descriptions to be taught during the first year of operation; do not provide syllabi.
12. Provide Common Content B – Faculty Qualifications, relative to the proposed change. All courses to be taught during the first year of operation must be assigned to at least one faculty member on the Faculty Roster.
13. Provide Common Content C – Resources, relative to the proposed change.
14. Provide Common Content D - Institutional Evaluation and Assessment Processes, relative to the proposed change.

■

Off-campus Instructional Site Approval (including branch campus) by Limited Review

☑ Submit a prospectus to include the following:

1. If multiple sites are proposed in a consolidated prospectus (see qualifying criteria), address each site separately, viz., the description of the physical resources and a Faculty Roster Form separated by site.
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. The intended implementation date.
5. Indicate if the site will be a branch campus.
6. If the site will be a branch campus, demonstrate the site will meet each of the following criteria:
    a. The site is geographically apart from an institution's main campus.
    b. Instruction is delivered at the site.
    c. The site is permanent.
    d. The site offers courses in educational programs leading to a degree, diploma, certificate, or other for-credit credential.
    e. The site has its own faculty and administrative or supervisory organization.
    f. The site has its own budgetary and hiring authority.
7. Provide Common Content A – Background and Context, relative to the proposed change.
8. Describe the educational program(s) to be offered at the site. If a program to be offered at the site is a new program requiring approval, also provide the prospectus information for New Program – Approval.
9. Provide documentation of approval to operate in the state where the site is located if the site is outside of the state of the institution's main campus (in addition to the state approval evidence in Common Content A).
10. Demonstrate how the institution will provide on-going administrative oversight and active supervision of the off-campus instructional site(s) / additional location(s).
11. Provide the course schedule and course descriptions to be taught during the first year of operation; do not provide syllabi.
12. Provide Common Content B – Faculty Qualifications, relative to the proposed change. All courses to be taught during the first year of operation must be assigned to at least one faculty member on the Faculty Roster.
13. Provide Common Content C – Resources, relative to the proposed change.
14. Provide Common Content D – Institutional Evaluation and Assessment Processes, relative to the proposed change.

■

Off-campus Instructional Site Relocation - Branch Campus

☑ Submit a prospectus to include the following:

1. Provide the current physical address and the proposed (new) physical address of the branch campus.
2. Provide the intended implementation or effective date of the relocation.
3. Describe the rationale and need for the relocation.
4. Provide evidence the relocation has been approved by the institution's governing board and, if required, the state governing board or authority.
5. Describe the planned process for the relocation (e.g., move at one time or phase-in with date of implementation).
6. Provide the number of students to be impacted.
7. Describe the instructional methods of delivery to be used at the proposed location and if they differ from the current location.
8. Describe the programs offered at the current location and programs to be offered at the proposed location, identifying any programs that will not continue to be offered once the institution relocates.
9. Provide narrative with supporting evidence that the number of full-time faculty members at the new location will be adequate to support the mission and goals of the institution.
10. Describe the impact of relocation on library and learning/information resources.
11. Describe the impact of relocation on student support services.
12. Describe the physical facilities of the proposed location and demonstrate how they are adequate to appropriately serve the needs of the institution's educational programs, support services, and other mission-related activities.
13. Describe how the institution will provide a health, safe and secure environment for all members of the campus community at the new location.
14. Describe financial resources available for the relocation, including a three-year budget.
15. Provide a contingency plan in the event required resources to fund the relocation do not materialize.
16. Describe the impact of the relocation on the assessment of student learning outcomes for each educational program.
17. Describe the impact of the relocation on the assessment of academic and student services that support student success.

■

Off-campus Instructional Site Closure

☑ Submit a teach-out plan to include the following:

1. Provide the closure date, defined by SACSCOC as the date when students are no longer *admitted*.
2. Provide a communication plan to inform all affected parties of the closure to include
    a. how each of the following will be informed for the closure:
        i. currently enrolled students,
        ii. students with lapsed enrollment (i.e., not currently enrolled but recently enrolled), and
        iii. prospective students.
    b. how faculty and staff will be informed, viz., admissions and recruiting / marketing staffs; and
    c. how community or industry partners will be informed. If not applicable, provide an affirmative statement to that effect.
3. If the institution is providing options for students to complete at another institution(s), provide copies of all planned communication from the institution and from the teach-out institution(s) related to the closure. All communication must demonstrate the institutions are making accurate statements about students' ability to transfer credits to the teach-out institution(s) and disclose tuition, fees, and other costs at the teach-out institution(s).
4. An explanation of how all affected students will be helped to complete their programs of study with minimal disruption or additional costs.
5. An explanation of whether the students subject to the teach-out plan will incur additional charges or other expenses because of the teach-out and, if so, how the students will be notified.
6. Copies of signed teach-out agreements with other institutions, if applicable.
7. A description of how faculty and staff will be redeployed or helped to find new employment.

Note: Do not submit individually identifiable student information.

■

Other Changes

Implementation Extension

☑ Submit a request to include the following:

1. The Case ID of the previously approved substantive change. Do not submit requests for multiple extensions in one request; submit each separately as needed. If more than one is included, only the first will be reviewed.
2. The type of substantive change as defined in policy that was previously approved; e.g., New Program - Approval, Off-campus Instructional Site Approval by Limited Review, etc.
3. The approval date of the previously approved substantive change.
4. The requested implementation extension date up to a maximum of one year (i.e., 12 months) after the approval date.
5. A statement of assurance that previous institutional, institutional governing board, and/or state approval(s) are unchanged as described in the institution's original submission for approval of the substantive change.
6. Narrative answers to the following questions:
    a. What is the reason for the implementation extension?
    b. How will the change differ compared to what was originally approved including, but not limited to, differences in student enrollment and the institution's financial resources to support the change? If none, explain.
    c. How will the institution ensure the quality and integrity of the change given the differences described in the preceding item? If none, explain.

■

Appendix B: Glossary

This glossary provides basic definitions of commonly used substantive change words and phrases. It is designed as a quick reference only. Refer to the more complete and detailed information elsewhere in this policy and in related policies.

Acquisition: Acquisition is the sale, exchange, or transfer of a component of an institution's or entity's assets to a SACSCOC accredited institution.
(See also merger/consolidation)

Additional location
See off-campus instructional site / additional location

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 instruction site / additional location

- that is geographically apart from an institution's main campus,
- where instruction is delivered, and
- is independent of the main campus of an institution.

An off-campus instructional site is independent of the main campus if it

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; and
4. has its own budgetary and hiring authority.

Closure: The ending of instruction

- 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
- such that a student cannot complete their program of study as planned.

(See also teach-out agreement and teach-out plan)

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.
(See also competency-based education by course/credit-based approach, competency-based education by direct assessment, and method of delivery)

Competency-based education by course / credit-based approach: Demonstrating competencies is embedded in a traditional curriculum with courses completed, credits earned, and a credential awarded. Students typically enroll in an academic term and course credits are awarded at the end of the term by demonstrating mastery of the competencies associated with a course. Students may accelerate learning through demonstration of competencies. Transcripts record courses and grades, though the institution may opt to maintain a separate transcript of competencies.

Competency-based education by direct assessment: Progression and completion of a program is based solely on demonstrating mastery of prescribed competencies. There are no academic terms (i.e., calendars), courses, or

credit hours. Students' progress through a program's competencies at their own pace within limits, if any, established by the institution. The academic transcript consists of successfully demonstrated competencies and the level of mastery attained.

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 also Standard 10.9 (Cooperative academic arrangements) of the *Principles of Accreditation*). Examples include geographic or denominational consortia, statewide distance education agreements, collaborative agreements with international institutions, and contractual instruction.

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.

Direct Assessment
See competency-based education by direct assessment

Distance education: A method of delivery in which 50% or more 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.
(See also method of delivery)

Distance learning
See distance education

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.
(See also joint academic award)

Educational program
See program

Face-to-face instruction: A method of delivery in which 50% or more of instruction occurs when students and instructors are in the same location.
(See also method of delivery)

Federal regulations: Rules and regulations of the U.S. Department of Education (USDE) as codified in the Code of Federal Regulation (C.F.R.) including but not limited to 34 C.F.R. § 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 (or geographically separate): Non-contiguous locations independent of distance.
See also off-campus instructional site / additional location (and branch campus)

Instructional level: For courses and programs, the level of content and rigor corresponding to traditional academic degree levels: associate, baccalaureate, master's, education specialist, or doctoral.

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.
(See also dual academic award)

Level authorization: SACSCOC authorization for an institution to offer instruction and credentials at a level lower than the highest level for which an institution is approved to offer instruction and credentials.

Level classification: An institutional status indicating the highest level for which an institution is approved to offer instruction and credentials.

Merger/consolidation: The sale, exchange, or transfer of all assets of at least one institution or entity to a SACSCOC accredited institution. Following a merger/consolidation, only one institution remains in operation as a separate institution or entity.
(See also acquisition)

Method of delivery: The principal method by which instruction is delivered to include:

- competency-based education (all forms),
- distance education, and
- face-to-face instruction.

Notification: An official communication from an institution to SACSCOC as defined in *Substantive Change Policy and Procedures*. A notification is complete only when accepted by SACSCOC upon satisfactory review by staff.
(See also approval)

Off-campus instructional site / additional location: A location

- geographically apart from an institution's sole main campus and
- where instruction is delivered.
- An off-campus instructional site may qualify as a branch campus.

(See also branch campus)

Oversight Entity: Under the federal Prison Education Program (PEP), the state department of corrections, Federal Bureau of Prisons, or other entity responsible for facilities were confined or incarcerate students are located.

Prior learning: Non-credentialed learning through life or work experience for which an institution will award academic credit by assessment of the prior learning and/or allow the prior learning to satisfy the requirements for completing a for-credit credential.

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. See also Standard 8.2.b (Student outcomes: general education) Standard 9.3 (General education requirements) of the *Principles of Accreditation*.

Prison Education Program (PEP): A federal program providing Pell Grant access to confined or incarcerated students.

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.

Teach-out: The process and time period of a teach-out plan.
(See also closure, teach-out agreement, and teach-out plan)

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.
(See also closure, teach-out, and teach-out agreement)

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.
(See also closure, teach-out, and teach-out plan)

■

Appendix C: Quick Reference

Substantive Change Types

This quick reference is designed as a summary only. It is not intended to replace a careful reading and understanding of policy. As a summary of select information, it provides an efficient reference to identify substantive change types and to make comparisons across types.

Substantive Change Type	Requires			Visit		Other	
This is a summary only. Always consult policy for complete information of substantive change types.	Notification	Approval – Exec Council	Approval – Full Board	Contingent	Required	Review Fee	Sub Change Restriction
INSTITUTIONAL CHANGES							
Acquisition	●		●		●	●	
Change Measure Progress to Completion		●				●	
CBE Course-Credit Approach-Institutional Approval		●				●	
Distance Ed-Institutional-level Approval		●				●	
Governance Change	●		●		●	●	
Institution Closure		●					
Institution Relocation		●				●	
Institutional Contingency Teach-out		●					
~~Level Change~~ [a]			~~●~~		~~●~~	~~●~~	
Level Authorization Addition		●				●	
Level Authorization Removal	●						
Level Change to a Higher Level			●		●	●	
Level Change to a Lower Level	●						
Merger / Consolidation	●		●		●	●	
Mission Change		●				●	
Ownership, Means of Control, or Legal Status Change	●		●		●	●	
Prison Education Program – Institutional-level Approval		●			●	●	
PROGRAM CHANGES							
Clock-Credit Hour Conversion		●					
CBE Direct Assessment-Approval			●		●	●	
CBE Direct Assessment-Notification	●						
Coop Acad Arr Title IV Entities	●						
Coop Acad Arr Non-Title IV Entities-Approval		●				●	●
Coop Acad Arr Non-Title IV Entities-Notification	●						●

Substantive Change Type	Requires			Visit		Other	
This is a summary only. Always consult policy for complete information of substantive change types.	Notification	Approval – Exec Council	Approval – Full Board	Contingent	Required	Review Fee	Sub Change Restriction
Correspondence Education		●				●	
Dual Academic Award	●						
Joint Academic Award with Non-SACSCOC Accredited Institution(s) or Entity(ies)		●				●	
Joint Academic Award with SACSCOC Institution(s)	●						
Method of Delivery-Approval		●					●
Method of Delivery-Notification	●						●
New Program-Approval		●				●	●
New Program-Notification	●						●
Program Closure		●					
Program Designed for Prior Learning-Approval		●				●	●
Program Designed for Prior Learning-Notification	●						●
Program Length Change		●				●	●
Program Re-open	●						
OFF-CAMPUS INSTRUCTIONAL SITE (OCIS) CHANGES							
OCIS Notification	●						
OCIS Approval Extensive Review			●	●		●	●
OCIS Approval Limited Review		●		●		●	●
OCIS Relocation - Non-Branch	●						
OCIS Relocation - Branch		●				●	
OCIS Name or Address Change	●						
OCIS Closure		●					
OCIS Re-open	●						
OTHER CHANGES							
Implementation Extension		●					

Notes:

(a) ~~Refer to Level Change for exceptions for embedded associate degrees and embedded Specialist degrees.~~

- Some of the types are abbreviated in this table; refer to the policy text for the full-text type.
- Action requirements are for an institution *not* on SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE RESTRICTION; see policy for requirements for an institution that *is* on SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE RESTRICTION.
- An institution on sanction when a substantive change is submitted is ineligible for Executive Council review (except for closures); full Board review is required.

■

Conditions for SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE RESTRICTION and for an Institutional Contingency Teach-out Plan

This quick reference is designed as a summary only. It is not intended to replace a careful reading and understanding of policy. As a summary of select information, it provides an efficient reference to identify the conditions for SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE RESTRICTION and for an Institutional Contingency Teach-out Plan.

IF (Condition)	THEN (Consequence)	
	The institution is:	
This is a summary only. Always consult policy for complete information.	on Substantive Change Restriction	required to submit an Institutional Contingency Teach-out Plan
SACSCOC PLACES THE INSTITUTION ON:		
Warning	●	
Probation	●	●
Probation for Good Cause	●	●
SACSCOC:		
Acts to end an institution's accreditation		●
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION (USDE) PLACES THE INSTITUTION:		
Under provisional certification for participation in federal financial aid programs	●	
Under provisional certification for participation in federal financial aid programs —AND— directs the institution to submit a teach-out plan	●	●
On reimbursement for federal financial aid		●
On heightened cash monitoring for federal financial aid		●
On emergency action or an action to limit, suspend, or terminate the institution's participation in federal financial aid		●
A STATE AUTHORITY:		
Revokes an institution's authorization		●

■

Appendix D: Summary of Recent Changes

- June 2025: Multiple additions and revisions (in approximate order of appearance) –
  - Added minor edits to the policy section for clarifications.
  - Removed all references to the *Seeking Accreditation at a Higher or Lower Degree Level* policy; all level change information revised and added to the substantive change policy to permit the separate outdated level change policy to be retired.
  - Deleted and replaced all existing level change language (a) to incorporate all level change information previously maintained in the separate level change policy and (b) to accommodate new substantive change types to more efficiently manage changes to level status and level authorizations.
  - Added miscellaneous clarifications to Institutional Contingency Teach-out Plan.
  - Added to the Program Re-open requirements that changes to level status or level authorization cannot be accomplished be re-opening a previously closed program.
  - Added new prospectus content in Appendix A for Level Authorization Addition.
  - Added new prospectus content in Appendix A for Level Change to a Higher Level.
  - Edited New Program - Approval prospectuses content: (a) clarified the curriculum for the entire program must be submitted and (b) removed the requirement to submit a projected schedule of courses.
  - Corrected an internal inconsistency regarding the criteria for a Program Length Change.
  - Added two new terms to the Appendix B glossary: level authorization and level classification.
  - Updated level change items in the Appendix C quick reference table.
- December 2024: Multiple additions and revisions (in approximate order ~~o~~f appearance) –
  - Removed references to the *Agreements Involving Joint and Dual Academic Awards* policy; all information added to the substantive change policy and the separate policy will be retired.
  - Added Implementation Extension to the substantive change types that can be reviewed by the Executive Council while an institution is on sanction (vs. reviewed by the full Board).
  - For institutional-level changes requiring notification in advance of a prospectus, (1) clarified notification is non-binding, and (2) added a requirement that a notification be submitted over the CEO signatures of all participating institutions / entities.
  - Added the required prospectus content for Competency-based Education by Direct Assessment – Approval.
  - Added, edited, combined, and created content for dual and joint academic awards.
  - Added a requirement that any proposed degree program that is less than the minimum length required by Standard 9.2 be submitted as a New Program – Approval prospectus.

Note: A redline (markup) version of all changes will be made available when possible.

- Added an exception for Program Length Change to allow an institution to voluntarily seek approval to meet federal gainful employment program requirements even if the length change doesn't meet SACSCOC's criteria.
- Added a condition that an Implementation Extension request be submitted before the policy-defined two-year implementation period ends.
- Clarified current language by providing an operational definition of the length of time an institution is on Substantive Change Restriction due to sanction.
- Added language to recognize the possibility of a teach-out agreement with a non-U.S. institution that is not accredited by a U.S.-based accreditor.
- Added language to the Institutional Contingency Teach-out Plan and to the Institution Closure to recognize recent federal regulations that limit withholding student transcripts.
- Added a requirement for Off-campus Instructional Site (OCIS) Approval by Limited Review for the institution to demonstrate on-going administrative oversight and active supervision of the site (creates a parallel obligation for both OCIS approval pathways: approval by extensive review and approval by limited review).
- Multiple re-wordings, examples, and parenthetical information for clarity.
- Miscellaneous typographical corrections.

- ~~June 2024: Multiple additions and revisions (in approximate order of appearance)~~
  - ~~Removed all references and requirements to the submission cover sheet (obsolete with online submissions, now required).~~
  - ~~Clarified implementation dates; marketing, advertising, recruitment, and admissions references; and staff option to reject materially deficient submissions.~~
  - ~~Added requirements to submit substantive change through the Institutional Portal only.~~
  - ~~Modified the Prison Education Program (PEP) prospectus content and review process.~~
  - ~~Added clarifying language and guidance on off-campus instructional site closures and name and address changes.~~
  - ~~Added a substantive change type for requesting an implementation extension.~~
  - ~~Added a new section addressing unreported substantive changes.~~
  - ~~Clarified institutional obligations and documentation for certain cooperative academic arrangements and joint academic awards.~~
  - ~~Clarified communication obligations in program closure and off-campus instructional site closure teach-out plans.~~
  - ~~Miscellaneous minor additions, clarifications, reformatting, and technical corrections.~~

- ~~March 2023: Added policy and procedure changes to accommodate the federal Prison Education Program (PEP) providing Pell Grant access to confined or incarcerated students.~~

■

Document history:
Revised for the Principles of Accreditation: February 2004
Adopted: Commission on Colleges, June 2008
Revised: Board of Trustees, Commission on Colleges, June 2009, June 2011, December 2011
Revised: Executive Council, March 2012 and Board of Trustees, June 2012
Revised: Board of Trustees, December 2012, December 2013
Updated: June 2014
Edited: January 2015
Adopted: Executive Council, March 2016
Edited, July 2016
Revised, SACSCOC Board of Trustees, December 2016
Revised for the Principles of Accreditation: January 2018
Revised: SACSCOC Board of Trustees, June 2018; December 2018; September 2020; March 2021; June 2021
Revised: Executive Council, March 2022; March 2023, June 2024

Document History: Procedures
June 2009
Edited: February 2013
Edited: January 2015
Edited: November 2015; September 2020; June 2021
Edited: May 2016, July 2016
Edited for the Principles of Accreditation: *May 2018*
Revised: December 2018; December 2020; March 2021; June 2021; December 2021; June 2022; June 2024; December 2024; June 2025

###