



Title: Substantive Change Policy		Type:	Key Institutional
No: KI 1002		Approval Date: 1-27-2014; 3-5-2014	
Responsible Office: VP Academic Affairs/Provost		Approved By: P&BC, Pres Staff, President	
Next Review: 2019		Revision No: 1	

I. Purpose/Introduction/Rationale

Substantive change is defined as any significant modification or expansion of the nature and scope of a regionally accredited U.S. higher education institution's programs. Rollins College is required to notify and/or seek approval from external accrediting agencies, particularly its regional accreditor the Southern Association of College and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC), when considering new programs or degrees (or modifications to existing programs and degrees) that fall under Federal regulations. The following definition, policy, and procedures ensure that Rollins meets notification and approval requirements of external accreditors.

II. Definition

Substantive change is defined as any significant modification or expansion of the nature and scope of a regionally accredited U.S. higher education institution's programs. Under Federal regulations, substantive change includes the following limited set of conceivable programs or proposals.

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

The SACSCOC complete *Substantive Change Policy Statement* is available in its entirety by [clicking here](#). In some cases, the Rollins SACSCOC Liaison will need to communicate with a SACSCOC staff member to determine: 1) if a proposed modification represents substantive change and 2) whether notification or approval is required from the College's regional accreditor.

III. Procedure or Application

1. Administrators, faculty, or staff from any division of the College developing proposals for new programs or considering modifications to existing programs must first follow the procedures described in policies KI 1003 *Creation and Revision of Academic, Non-Credit, and Collaborative Programs*.

Note: In keeping with policy KI 1003 noted above, initiating a new program or making significant modifications to an existing program requires completion of a detailed proposal and any required SACSCOC documentation by the program seeking the change. The detailed proposal usually includes (see KI 1003 *Creation and Revision of Academic, Non-Credit, and Collaborative Programs* for a proposal template):

- complete program details and adequate justification;
 - a budget and/or outline of resources required;
 - a detailed description of required faculty, faculty availability, and faculty credentials;
 - verification of consultation with other College stakeholders – e.g., Records, Library, Finance, Bursar, Human Resources, Admission and Financial Aid, appropriate Vice President(s), and/or President, and
 - verification of appropriate Faculty and administrative governing body approvals.
2. All initiatives that involve any consideration discussed in the SACSCOC *Substantive Change Policy Statement* must be presented to the College's SACSCOC Liaison as soon as a draft proposal is prepared.
 3. The SACSCOC Liaison will make a determination in consultation with senior leadership of the College as to whether the proposed initiative requires additional institutional and/or external accreditor notification or approval, and ensure that Rollins is prepared to promptly communicate with accrediting agencies as required.
 4. **If it is determined that a substantive change notification or prospectus and SACSCOC approval is required, the sponsoring dean and/or program director is responsible for developing all documentation required by external accreditors. The sponsoring dean and/or program director must meet with the Assistant Provost to review reporting requirements and timelines, and must collaborate with appropriate faculty, staff, and the SACSCOC Liaison to prepare all documentation required by the accreditor(s).**
 5. The SACSCOC Liaison will notify all concerned parties when the appropriate notification or request for substantive change has been filed, and when resulting approvals are received.

IV. Related Policies or Applicable Publications

[SACSCOC Substantive Change Policy Statement](#)

KI 1003 *Creation and Revision of Academic, Non-Credit, and Collaborative Programs*

V. Appendices/Supplemental Materials

1. Substantive Changes That Must Receive SACSCOC Approval
2. Substantive Changes That Require SACSCOC Notification Only
3. Terms Used by SACSCOC in the Substantive Change Process

VI. Rationale for Revision

Revised 2-24-2014 for final approval of KI 1003 and minor grammatical corrections.

Appendix I

Substantive Changes That Must Receive SACSCOC Approval

Reprinted from: Southern Association of College and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC). (2013). *Substantive Change for Accredited Institutions of the Commission on Colleges: Policy Statement*. Retrieved from <http://www.sacscoc.org/SubstantiveChange.asp> <http://www.sacscoc.org/pdf/081705/Substantive%20change%20policy.pdf>.

Substantive changes requiring submission of an application or a prospectus to, and approval by, the SACSCOC Board of Trustees prior to implementation by the institution are as follows.

1. Initiating coursework, certificates, or programs of study at a different level than those previously approved by SACSCOC. *Institutions may not offer individual credit courses or programs beyond the level of current accreditation. Examples include: an associate degree granting college initiating bachelor's degrees or a four-year institution initiating degrees at the master's level; a graduate institution initiating degrees at the undergraduate level; a baccalaureate degree-granting institution initiating occupational and technical degrees at the associate degree level. An institution requesting a level change should complete an **Application** for Members Seeking Accreditation at a Higher or Lower Degree Level.*

Note: Repackaging of an existing approved curriculum to create a new degree level, such as an institution that offers a full 120-hour baccalaureate program creating an associate degree from its lower-division offerings, usually requires only advance notification, not approval. SACSCOC classifies institutions according to the highest degree level offered by an institution.

Those classifications are as follows:

- Level I Offers the associate degree as the highest degree
- Level II Offers the baccalaureate degree as the highest degree
- Level III Offers the master's degree as the highest degree
- Level IV Offers the master's and specialist degree as the highest degrees
- Level V Offers three or fewer doctorate degrees as highest degrees
- Level VI Offers four or more doctorate degrees

An institution adding a fourth doctorate degree, causing it to be reclassified from Level V to Level VI, is required to request the level change in writing in order for SACSCOC to reclassify the institution within its data base. Applications for a change from Level III to Level IV and Level V to Level VI will be reviewed and, if possible, approved by staff.

2. Initiating certificate programs for workforce development. *These are typically offered at the request of an employer, either on campus or at the workplace. Offering previously approved certificate programs at an unapproved off-campus site requires approval of the site prior to implementation. Similarly, offering a certificate program that is a significant departure from existing approved certificate programs, either on or off campus, requires approval of the program prior to implementation. SACSCOC will waive the six-month notification requirement and accept a modified prospectus consisting of the name of the certificate, date of implementation, the complete physical address of the off-campus site (if applicable), a faculty roster, a discipline specific description of library/learning resources, a description of physical facilities, and descriptions of courses to be offered at the site.*

3. Initiating other certificate programs. *Certificate programs consisting of courses drawn from the existing approved curriculum for a degree or diploma program do not require separate approval; they are considered to be included in the institution's current accreditation. However, to offer such a certificate at a new site requires approval of the site. A certificate that is a significant departure from previously approved programs must be approved in advance—the same as any other new educational program.*

4. Initiating an off-campus (additional) site (site-based/classroom group instruction) at which students can earn at least 50% of the credits toward an educational program. *Locations at which instruction is offered by distance delivery, but students must be present on-site to access such instruction, are considered off-campus instructional sites and must be approved in advance. Approval of an off-campus site is effective for a maximum of five years and will be reviewed again in the context of the fifth-year or decennial review. For an institution replicating an approved educational program that is already offered at three or more approved sites, a modified prospectus consisting of a faculty roster, descriptions of the courses to be offered at the site, a description of discipline-specific library resources, a description of student support services, and a description of physical resources will suffice in lieu of responding to the requirements of a full prospectus.*

5. Initiating degree completion programs. *Degree completion programs usually include a compressed format with classes offered evenings or weekends to accommodate working adults and a requirement to transfer in some amount of previous college credit, and may include offering credit for career or life experience. The prospectus should include a discussion of how the degree completion program differs from the same program offered in traditional form, and how the institution will ensure that student learning outcomes are the same for both offerings. An example of such a change is adult or accelerated programs in management or organizational leadership.*

6. Initiating a branch campus. *A branch campus is defined as a location of an institution that is geographically apart from and independent of the main campus of the institution. A location is independent of the main campus if the location is (1) permanent in nature, (2) offers courses in educational programs leading to a degree, certificate, or other recognized educational credential, (3) has its own faculty and administrative or supervisory organization, and (4) has its own budgetary and hiring authority. The prospectus for a proposed branch campus must include a business plan for the branch campus that describes: the educational program(s) to be offered at the branch campus; the projected revenues and expenditures and cash flow at the branch campus; and the operation, management, and physical resources at the branch campus.*

7. Initiating distance learning or correspondence courses and programs by which students can earn at least 50% of a program's credits through delivery in a format other than face-to-face. *Institutions must demonstrate that a student who registers for a distance or correspondence course or program is the same student who participates in and completes the course or program and receives academic credit. Means of verification might include a secure login and pass code, proctored examinations, or other technologies and practices that are effective in verifying student identification. Processes used to verify student identity must also protect student privacy. (Please see also the SACSCOC policy "**Distance and Correspondence Education.**")*

8. Expanding at the institution's current degree level (significant departure from current programs). *What constitutes a "significant departure" from existing programs depends on what related programs are currently in place at a given institution. Refer to the Glossary of Terms for more specificity. Examples include the following: developing a new general education program, adding a master's degree in nursing when the institution is*

accredited at Level III but currently offers only a master's degree in education; an institution accredited at Level II (bachelor's degrees), offering only a bachelor's degree with a major in religion, adding three new bachelor's degrees with majors in biology, business administration, and computer science.

9. Initiating a significant change in the established mission of the institution. *Significant changes in mission are those that lead to a fundamental shift in the nature of the institution. Examples include the following: the transformation of a technical college into a comprehensive community college, the initiation by a seminary of significant liberal arts offerings, the addition by a medical college of general education offerings, the initiation of an engineering school at a liberal arts institution. Editorial changes in the language of a mission statement are **not** substantive and need not be reported. See Commission staff regarding the prospectus. The change in mission may dictate a mix of required documentation.*

10. Changing from clock hours to credit hours. *The prospectus must include a clear explanation of the formula used to calculate equivalency of credit awarded. (Please see also the SACSCOC policy “**Credit Hours**.”)*

11. Changing significantly the length of a program, substantially increasing the number of clock or credit hours awarded for successful completion of a program. *Significant changes in program length are those with noticeable impact on the program’s completion time. Examples include: expanding a certificate program from 250 contact hours to 450 contact hours or increasing a baccalaureate degree from 124 hours to 150 hours, or reducing program length from 140 hours to 128 hours.*

12. Relocating a main or branch campus. *The prospectus should demonstrate that the new facilities maintain the institution’s compliance with Comprehensive Standard 3.11 (Physical Resources).*

13. Initiating a collaborative academic program with another institution not accredited by SACSCOC. *The prospectus should demonstrate compliance with the SACSCOC policy “**Agreements Involving Joint and Dual Academic Awards: Policy and Procedures**”. Examples include joint degree or dual degree programs.*

14. Entering into a contract with an entity not certified to participate in US Department of Education Title IV programs. *This applies if the entity provides 25% or more of an educational program offered by the accredited institution. The prospectus must include a copy of the signed agreement.*

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

Appendix II

Substantive Changes That Require SACSCOC Notification Only

Substantive changes requiring an institution to notify the President of SACSCOC prior to implementation by the institution are as follows.

1. For site-based/classroom group instruction where the instructor is present.

- a. Initiating an off-campus site at which a student may earn at least 25% but less than 50 % of credits toward a program. The letter of notification must include the starting date and complete physical address of the new site.*
- b. Moving an approved off-campus instructional site within the same geographic area to serve essentially the same pool of students. The letter of notification must include the complete physical address of the old site, the complete physical address of the new site, and the starting date of the new site.*

2. For distance learning/technology-based group or individual instruction where the instructor and student are geographically separated. *Offering credit courses via distance learning/technology-based instruction through which students may obtain at least 25% but less than 50% of their credits toward completing an educational program for the first time.*

3. Initiating program/courses delivered through contractual agreement or a consortium. *This provision does not apply to articulation agreements with other institutions, clinical agreements, or internship agreements. The notification must include (1) a letter with the starting date of the agreement and the names of the institutions and programs involved and (2) a copy of the signed agreement.*

4. Entering into a contract with an entity not certified to participate in US DoEd Title IV programs if the entity provides less than 25% of an educational program offered by the accredited institution. *A copy of the signed agreement must be provided.*

5. Repackaging of an existing approved curriculum to create a new degree level, such as an institution that offers a full 120-hour baccalaureate program creating an associate degree from its lower-division offerings, usually requires only advance notification, not approval.

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

Appendix III

Terms Used by SACSCOC in the Substantive Change Process

Branch campus – *location of an institution that is geographically apart and independent of the main campus of the institution. A location is independent of the main campus if the location is permanent in nature offers courses in educational programs leading to a degree, certificate, or other recognized educational credential has its own faculty and administrative or supervisory organization **and** has its own budgetary and hiring authority*

Contractual Agreement – *typically one in which an institution enters an agreement for receipt of courses/programs or portions of courses or programs (i.e., clinical training internships, etc.) delivered by another institution or service provider.*

Consortia Relationship -- *A consortia relationship typically is one in which two or more institutions share in the responsibility of developing and delivering courses and programs that meet mutually agreed upon standards of academic quality.*

Correspondence Education -- *a formal educational process under which the institution provides instructional materials, by mail or electronic transmission, including examinations on the materials, 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.*

Degree Completion Program – *a program typically designed for a non-traditional undergraduate population such as working adults who have completed some college-level course work but have not achieved a baccalaureate degree. Students in such programs may transfer in credit from courses taken previously and may receive credit for experiential learning. Courses in degree completion programs are often offered in an accelerated format or meet during evening and weekend hours, or may be offered via distance learning technologies.*

Distance Education – *a formal educational process in which the majority of the instruction (interaction between students and instructors and among students) in a course occurs when students and instructors are not in the same place. Instruction may be synchronous or asynchronous. A distance education course may use the internet; one-way and two-way transmissions through open broadcast, closed circuit, cable, microwave, broadband lines, fiber optics, satellite, or wireless communications devices; audio conferencing; or video cassettes, DVD's, and CD-ROMs if used as part of the distance learning course or program.*

Dual Degree – *separate program completion credentials each of which bears only the name, seal, and signature of the institution awarding the degree to the student.*

Educational Program – *a coherent course of study leading to the awarding of a credential (i.e., a degree, diploma or certificate).*

Geographically separate – *an instructional site or branch campus that is located physically apart from the main campus of the institution.*

Joint degree – *a single program completion credential bearing the names, seals, and signatures of each of the two or more institutions awarding the degree to the student.*

Modified prospectus – a prospectus submitted in lieu of a full prospectus for certain designated substantive changes. When a modified prospectus is acceptable, the Commission specifies requested information from the institution.

Notification – a letter from an institution’s chief executive officer, or his/her designated representative, to SACSCOC President summarizing a proposed change, providing the intended implementation date, and listing the complete physical address if the change involves the initiation of an off-campus site or branch campus. The policy and procedures for reporting and review of institutional substantive change are outlined in the document “Substantive Change for Accredited Institutions of the Commission on Colleges.”

Significant departure – a program that is not closely related to previously approved programs at the institution or site or for the mode of delivery in question. To determine whether a new program is “significant departure,” it is helpful to consider the following questions.

- What previously approved programs does the institution offers that are closely related to the new program and how are they related?
- Will significant additional equipment or facilities be needed?
- Will significant additional financial resources be needed?
- Will a significant number of new courses will be required?
- Will a significant number of new faculty members will be required?
- Will significant additional library/learning resources be needed?

Teach-out agreement – 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 50% or more of at least one program offered, ceases to operate before all enrolled students have completed their program of study. This applies to the closure of an institution, a site, or a program. Such a teach-out agreement requires SACSCOC approval in advance of implementation.

Teach-out plan – a written plan developed by an institution that provides for the equitable treatment of students if an institution, or an institutional location that provides 50% 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. This applies to the closure of an institution, a site, or a program. Teach-out plans must be approved by SACSCOC in advance of implementation.