

2.3.5.L Augusta Technical College Substantive Change Reporting



Reference:

Southern Association of College and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) *The Principles of Accreditation, Section 3.12.1*

Policy:

Augusta Technical College is responsible to comply with the Commission's Substantive Change Policy as a condition of continued accreditation by SACSCOC. Substantive change is defined by the Commission as a significant modification or expansion of the nature and scope of an accredited institution. The member institution is responsible for following the substantive change policy by informing the Commission of changes in accord with the Commission's procedures and, when required, seeking approval prior to the initiation of the change.

Under federal regulations, substantive change includes:

- Any change in the established mission or goals of the College
- Any change in legal status, form of control, or ownership of the College
- 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 College 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 College's current accreditation or reaffirmation
- A change from clock hours to credit hours
- A substantial increase in the number of clock or credit hours awarded for successful completion of a program
- The establishment of an additional location geographically apart from the main campus at which the College offers at least 50 percent of an educational program
- The establishment of a branch campus
- Closing a program, off-campus site, branch campus or institution

- Entering into a collaborative academic arrangement that includes only the initiation of a dual degree program or a joint degree program with another institution
- Acquiring another institution or a program or location of another institution
- Adding a permanent location at a site where the College 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.

Responsibility:

Responsibilities of President, Vice Presidents, Deans, and Directors

The President, Vice Presidents, Deans, and Directors have the fundamental responsibility to be aware of the substantive change policy, inform the College SACSCOC Liaison at the earliest point possible of proposals that may be considered a substantive change for the College, and provide the SACSCOC Liaison with data, information, or prospectus necessary to comply with the SACSCOC policy when requested.

President, Vice Presidents and Deans will serve as the College's Substantive Change Monitoring Committee. The Directors will serve as consultants to the Committee as needed. The Committee, which meets at least annually and/or when proposals are submitted, is responsible for reviewing proposals that may be considered a substantive change for the College. The Committee is also instrumental in preparing any substantive change or prospectus necessary to ensure compliance with SACSCOC policies. Each committee member is responsible for being knowledgeable of the SACSCOC Substantive Change Policy.

The President, or designee, is responsible for notifying the Commission of any substantive changes. The President must review and sign all substantive change documents.

Responsibilities of the SACSCOC Liaison

Each SACSCOC member institution has an accreditation liaison whose charge is to ensure compliance with accreditation requirements. The Vice President of Institutional Effectiveness & Research serves as the College SACSCOC Liaison. The liaison will:

- Provide the President, Vice Presidents, Deans, and Directors with information about the SACSCOC Substantive Change Policy. This includes providing current information concerning substantive change to the College website and sending information about substantive change to the President, Vice Presidents, Deans and Directors at least annually;

- Share the substantive change policy and/or changes to the policy with President's Faculty Advisory Council and President's Leadership Team at least annually;
- Conduct at least one professional development session per academic year on the topic of substantive change to faculty and staff at the College;
- Serve on the College's Substantive Change Monitoring Committee;
- Provide examples of substantive change in the Office of Institutional Effectiveness & Research;
- Work with the College's Substantive Change Monitoring Committee to determine whether a proposed change is substantive;
- Determine what action with respect to SACSCOC is needed when a change is substantive;
- Assist the President with filing the appropriate notice or prospectus with SACSCOC;
- If the Commission requires the College to write a prospectus or prepare additional documentation beyond the notification letter, the accreditation liaison, with assistance from administrators, is responsible for preparing the documentation;
- Organize any substantive change committee visit;
- Coordinate with SACSCOC, the President, Vice Presidents, Deans, and Directors about any required follow-up action.

Procedure:

Time and Notification

The SACSCOC guidelines for reporting substantive change, as specified in the Commission's policy, Substantive Change for Accredited Institutions of the Commission on Colleges, are the fundamental resource for reporting substantive change and for planning reports. The guidelines may be found at the following address: <http://www.sacscoc.org>.

Notification of SACSCOC Liaison of Proposed Changes

If a change is substantive, SACSCOC must be notified as much as 12 months in advance of implementing the change. Academic Deans are responsible for referring to the College Substantive Change Policy and notifying the Vice President for Academic Affairs immediately when program/curriculum changes are being considered. The Associate Dean for Distance Education is responsible for notifying the appropriate Academic Dean and the Vice President for Academic Affairs immediately when the following type of substantive change is being considered: adding a distance education

program that is a significant departure from the distance education programs currently approved.

For new programs requested in the online Technical College System of Georgia (TCSG) Program Management System, a description of the accreditation process and the expected date of accreditation are required prior to the submission to the State Board of the Technical College System of Georgia for approval.

Programs approved for termination by the governing State Board of the Technical College System of Georgia or through the automatic TCSG Purge Process will also be submitted to the Vice President for Institutional Effectiveness & Research/SACSCOC Liaison for SACSCOC notification.

Upon becoming aware of a proposed change that may be substantive, the Vice President for Academic Affairs will consult with the Vice President for Institutional Effectiveness & Research/SACSCOC Liaison will have the Academic Dean/Associate Dean proposing the change complete the SACSCOC Substantive Change Checklist.

The Substantive Change Monitoring Committee will then schedule a meeting to review the checklist, discuss the proposed changes, and make a recommendation to the President.

Upon approval of the President, the Vice President for Institutional Effectiveness & Research/SACSCOC Liaison will follow the appropriate procedure to submit the notification and supporting documentation to the President of SACSCOC within the reporting time lines as established in the SACSCOC Substantive Change Policy.

No employee of the College will implement any change to a College policy, program, process, or property that might create a substantive change without the approval of the Substantive Change Monitoring Committee. Anyone proposing a change will first need to complete the Substantive Change Checklist for the Committee to review.

Late Notification to SACSCOC Liaison

If it is discovered that a change that may be considered substantive has been implemented without notification of the SACSCOC Liaison, the Vice President for Academic Affairs has the responsibility to notify the SACSCOC Liaison immediately. It is then the responsibility of the SACSCOC Liaison to notify the Commission as provided in the SACSCOC Policy.

To ensure that changes that may be considered substantive do not go unreported, the Substantive Change Monitoring Committee should review all proposed changes.

Reporting the Various Types of Substantive Change

The different types of substantive change, the specific procedure to be used for each, their respective approval/notification requirements, and their reporting time lines are included in the table that follows. Please read the full text under the appropriate procedure for details regarding reporting.

Types of Change	Procedure or Policy	Prior Notification Required	Prior Approval Required	Documentation and Time Frame for Contacting SACSCOC
Initiating coursework or programs at a different level than currently approved	Procedure 1	No	Yes	Application for Level Change Due dates: March 15 (for June review) September 1 (for December review)
Initiating off-campus sites where student can obtain 50% or more credits toward a program (including but not limited to Early College High School, dual enrollment programs offered at a high school, and certificate programs that are not at employer's request and not on short notice)	Procedure 1	No	Yes	Cover Sheet Prospectus (See Appendix B of this document) Due dates: January 1 for 7/1-12/31 implementation July 1 for 1/1-6/30 implementation
Expanding at current degree level (<i>significant departure from current programs</i>).				
Expanding program offerings at previously approved off-campus sites by adding programs that ARE significantly different from current programs at the site AND at the institution				
Initiating degree completion programs				
Initiating a branch campus (See definition of "branch campus" on p. 3 of this document.)				
Initiating distance learning by offering 50% or more of the first program for the first time				
Relocating a main or branch campus				
Entering into a contract with an entity not certified to participate in USDOE Title IV programs if the entity provides 25% or more of an educational program offered by the SACSCOC accredited institution				

Types of Change	Procedure or Policy	Prior Notification Required	Prior Approval Required	Documentation and Time Frame for Contacting SACSCOC
Initiating dual or joint degrees involving program expansion (significant departure) or initiating a new site where student can obtain 50% or more credits toward a program	See SACSCOC policy " Agreements Involving Joint and Dual Academic Awards "	No	Yes	Cover Sheet Prospectus (See Appendix B of this document) Due dates: January 1 for 7/1-12/31 implementation July 1 for 1/1-6/30 implementation Copy of signed agreement, contact information for each institution, and additional details on non-SACSCOC institution(s) involved. See Policy
Initiating dual or joint degree with at least one institution <u>not</u> accredited by SACSCOC	See SACSCOC Policy " Agreements Involving Joint and Dual Academic Awards "	At least 6 months prior to implementation	Yes	Acceptance of notification, copy of signed agreement, contact information for each institution, and additional details on non-SACSCOC institution(s). See Policy.
Initiating a direct assessment competency-based program	See SACSCOC Policy " Direct Assessment Competency-Based Educational Programs "	Yes – Screening Form	Yes	Submit "Screening Form" with letter of notification. If Prospectus is required, Due dates: March 15 (for June review) September 1 (for December review)
Initiating a merger/consolidation with another institution Changing governance, ownership, control, or legal status of an institution Acquiring any program or site from another institution Adding a permanent location at a site where the institution is conducting a teach-out for students from another institution that is closing	See SACSCOC Policy: " Mergers, Consolidations, Change of Ownership, Acquisitions, and Change of Governance, Control, Form, or Legal Status "	Yes: December 15 (for June review); June 1 (for December review)	Yes	Cover Sheet Institutional Summary Form Prospectus (See Appendix in SACSCOC Policy: " Mergers, Consolidations, Change of Ownership, Acquisitions, and Change of Governance, Control, Form, or Legal Status ") Due dates: March 15 (for June review); September 1 (for December review)

Types of Change	Procedure or Policy	Prior Notification Required	Prior Approval Required	Documentation and Time Frame for Contacting SACSCOC
Initiating a certificate program at a new off-campus site at employer's request and on short notice (previously approved program)	Procedure 1	No	Yes	Cover Sheet Modified prospectus Contact Commission Staff.
Initiating a certificate program that is a significant departure from previously approved programs at employer's request and on short notice				
Adding a site under a U.S. military contract for a previously approved program				
Altering significantly the length of a program				
Altering significantly the educational mission of the institution				
Changing from clock hours to credit hours	Procedure 1	No	Yes	Justify reasons for change, indicate calculation of equivalency, and other pertinent information
Moving an off-campus instructional site (serving the same geographic area)	Procedure 2	Yes	No	Letter of notification with old address, new address, and implementation date
Initiating dual or joint degrees with other SACSCOC accredited institution(s)	See SACSCOC Policy " Agreements Involving Joint and Dual Academic Awards "	At least 6 months prior to implementation	No	Acceptance of notification, copy of signed agreement and contact information for each institution. See Policy.
Initiating programs or courses offered through contractual agreement or consortium	Procedure 2	Yes	No	Letter of notification and copy of signed agreement
Entering into a contract with an entity not certified to participate in USDOE Title IV programs if the entity provides less than 25% of an educational program offered by the SACSCOC accredited institution				

Types of Change	Procedure or Policy	Prior Notification Required	Prior Approval Required	Documentation and Time Frame for Contacting SACSCOC
Initiating off-campus sites where student can obtain 25-49% of credits toward a program (including but not limited to Early College High School, dual enrollment programs offered at a high school, and certificate programs that are not at employer's request and not on short notice)	Procedure 2	Yes	No	Letter of notification Including street address and implementation date
Initiating distance learning by offering 25-49 of the first program for the first time				
Closing a program, approved off-campus site, branch campus, or institution where the institution plans to teach out its own students	Procedure 3	Yes	Yes	Description of teach-out plan included with letter of notification
Closing a program, approved off-campus site, branch campus, or institution where the institution plans contracts with another institution(s) to teach-out students (Teach-out Agreement)	Procedure 3	Yes	Yes	Description of teach-out plan, copy of signed teach-out agreement(s) detailing terms included with notification

Types of Change	Procedure or Policy	Prior Notification Required	Prior Approval Required	Documentation and Time Frame for Contacting SACSCOC
Initiating a certificate program at employer's request and on short notice using existing approved courses and location	NA	No	No	NA
Initiating certificate program (not at employer's request and not on short notice) using existing approved courses and location				
Initiating off-campus sites (including Early College High School and dual enrollment programs offered at the high school) where student can obtain 24% or less of credits toward a program				
Expanding program offerings at previously approved off-campus sites by adding approved programs that ARE NOT significantly different from current programs at the site				
Expanding program offerings at previously approved off-campus sites by adding approved programs that ARE significantly different from current programs at the site but NOT at the institution				
Initiating distance learning by offering 24% or less of any program for the first time				