

E.2.1.1 (Procedure) Substantive Change

Responsible Department: Vice Chancellor for Academic Success

Based on Board Policy: [E.2.1 – Substantive Change](#)

Approved: 10-22-13

Last Amended: 3-5-15, 1-26-2021

As participating Title IV institutions, each of the Alamo Colleges is required to enable compliance with the obligation of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (“SACSCOC”) to the U.S. Department of Education to review and approve changes of a substantive nature, as such; the Alamo Colleges accredited institutions shall follow SACSCOC Substantive Change Policy Statement and Procedures found at <https://sacscoc.org/app/uploads/2019/08/SubstantiveChange.pdf>

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.

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 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.
- 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

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for students of another institution that has ceased operating before all student 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.

The different types of substantive change, the specific procedure to be used for each, their respective approval/notification requirements and their reporting timelines are included in SACSCOC Substantive Change Policy and Procedures. Each of the Alamo Colleges is responsible for compliance with the required procedures and reporting timelines for each type of substantive change.

The President for a College, and the Board of Trustees, will maintain internal approval authority relating to each type of substantive change request sent to the SACSCOC.

The Accreditation Liaison shall inform all responsible individuals at each level of the District, to include Vice presidents, Deans, Directors and Chairs, of the SACS substantive change policy and the institutional substantive change policy on a biannual basis (August and February) and at the same time shall request notification of substantive changes in planning for the next 12-month period at the SLT. The 12-month timeframe will provide a long-range outlook to ensure that notifications can be carried out six months prior to implementation of substantive change. The Accreditation Liaison shall prepare the President's notification and/or request to the SACSCOC regarding the substantive changes that are reported.

If a prospectus is subsequently required by the SACSCOC, the deans or appropriate senior administrators shall coordinate preparation of the prospectus and forward the prospectus to the Accreditation Liaison for final review.

The Accreditation Liaison shall review a required prospectus and obtain approval of the President before preparing the prospectus for submission to SACSCOC by the President.

Each College shall maintain academic program approval procedures and forms that:

1. Recognize substantive changes related to academic and appropriate approval documents, including those related to curriculum review and dual credit agreements. These documents shall accompany any proposal for SACSCOC approval at each step.;
2. Require approval by the appropriate educational unit faculties and also include any recommendations offered by the corresponding department chair, dean, and/or Vice President prior to approval of academic substantive change by the College Academic Council;
3. Provide for timely notification to the Commission on Colleges prior to change implementation, as required by the SACS substantive change policy.

Reference:

SACS Principles of Accreditation 3.12.1 – Substantive Changes