

## 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:

The Southern Association of College 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*.

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.

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. An agreement offering more than 50% of one or more of an institution's programs is prohibited by federal regulation.
- Substantially increase or decrease in 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.

**Related Authority:**

- State Board Policy 2.3.5. Technical College Substantive Change Reporting
- SACSCOC Substantive Change Policy and Procedures
- 5.1.9.L.p Augusta Technical College Curriculum Program Review Procedures

**Responsibility:**Responsibilities of the SACSCOC Liaison

Each SACSCOC member institution has an accreditation liaison whose charge is to ensure compliance with accreditation requirements. Provost serves as the College SACSCOC Liaison. The liaison will:

- Serve on the Curriculum Committee.
- 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 the Faculty Advisory Council and President's Leadership Team annually.
- Determine what action with respect to SACSCOC is needed when a change is substantive and prepare any substantive change or prospectus necessary to ensure compliance with SACSCOC policies.
- Organize any substantive change committee visit.
- Coordinate with SACSCOC, the President, Vice Presidents, Deans, and Directors about any required follow-up action.

Responsibilities of President, Provost, and Curriculum Committee

The President, Vice Presidents, Deans, and Curriculum Committee members have the fundamental responsibility for being knowledgeable of the SACSCOC Substantive Change Policy, informing the College SACSCOC Liaison (Provost) at the earliest point possible of proposals that may be considered a substantive change for the College, and provide the SACSCOC Liaison (Provost) with data, information, or prospectus necessary to comply with the SACSCOC policy when requested.

The Curriculum Committee is charged with reviewing and approving program changes and identifying and preparing substantive changes for Augusta Technical College. While the SACSCOC Liaison (Provost) is responsible for preparing any substantive change or prospectus necessary to ensure compliance with SACSCOC policies, the Curriculum Committee members, with the Dean of Academic Affairs assistance, will be responsible for assisting with any documentation collection and/or review needed. The SACSCOC Liaison (Provost) determines, upon committee approval, the type of

notice and/or communication (notification, approval, prospectus, etc.) to SACSCOC is necessary and is responsible for ensuring that substantive changes requiring approval prior to implementation are not initiated before SACSCOC approval is granted.

## **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. The Curriculum Committee is responsible for referring to the College Substantive Change Policy when program/curriculum changes are being considered. This includes considerations affecting the type of modality offerings for programs.

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 (see Policy [2.3.5](#)).

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 SACSCOC by the SACSCOC Liaison (Provost).

Upon becoming aware of a proposed change that may be substantive, Academic Dean will consult the [SACSCOC Substantive Change Checklist](#). The Curriculum Committee will then schedule a meeting to review the checklist, discuss the proposed changes, and review the documentation submitted for the change (see [5.1.9.L.p](#)). Upon approval of the change, the SACSCOC Liaison (Provost) will follow the appropriate procedure to submit the notification and supporting documentation to the President of SACSCOC within the reporting timelines as established in the SACSCOC Substantive Change Policy.

No employee of the College will implement any change to a program, process or property that might create a substantive change without the approval of the Curriculum Committee.

### 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 (Provost) has the responsibility to notify the Commission immediately in alignment with the SACSCOC Policy. To ensure that changes that may be considered substantive do not go unreported, the Curriculum 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 timelines 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	<a href="#">Application for Level Change</a>  <b>Due dates:</b> 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 <a href="#">Prospectus</a> (See <a href="#">Appendix B of this document</a> )  <b>Due dates:</b> 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 <a href="#">“Agreements Involving Joint and Dual Academic Awards”</a>	No	Yes	Cover Sheet <a href="#">Prospectus</a> <a href="#">(See Appendix B of this document)</a>  <b>Due dates:</b> 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 <a href="#">“Agreements Involving Joint and Dual Academic Awards”</a>	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 <a href="#">“Direct Assessment Competency-Based Educational Programs”</a>	Yes – Screening Form	Yes	Submit “Screening Form” with letter of notification. If Prospectus is required, <b>Due dates:</b> March 15 (for June review) September 1 (for December review)
<p>Initiating a merger/consolidation with another institution</p> <p>Changing governance, ownership, control, or legal status of an institution</p> <p>Acquiring any program or site from another institution</p> <p>Adding a permanent location at a site where the institution is conducting a teach-out for students from another institution that is closing</p>	See SACSCOC Policy: <a href="#">“Mergers, Consolidations, Change of Ownership, Acquisitions, and Change of Governance, Control, Form, or Legal Status”</a>	Yes: December 15 (for June review); June 1 (for December review)	Yes	Cover Sheet Institutional Summary Form Prospectus (See Appendix in SACSCOC Policy: <a href="#">“Mergers, Consolidations, Change of Ownership, Acquisitions, and Change of Governance, Control, Form, or Legal Status”</a> )  <b>Due dates:</b> 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 <a href="#">"Agreements Involving Joint and Dual Academic Awards"</a>	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
<p>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)</p> <p>Initiating distance learning by offering 25-49 of the first program for the first time</p>	Procedure 2	Yes	No	Letter of notification Including street address and implementation date
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				

## Substantive Change Policy and Procedures

- [Substantive Change Policy and Procedures](#) (Revised March 2023) [PDF]
- [Redline Substantive Change Resource](#) (Revised March 2023) [PDF]
- [Advertising and Student Recruitment](#) [PDF]
- [Agreements Involving Joint and Dual Academic Awards](#) [PDF]
- [Direct Assessment Competency-based Educational Programs](#) [PDF]
- [Distance and Correspondence Education](#) [PDF]
- [Documents Submitted for SACSCOC Review](#) [PDF]
- [Merger/Consolidation, Acquisition, Change of Ownership, and Change Of Governance, Control, Form, or Legal Status](#) [PDF]
- [Principles of Accreditation](#) [PDF]
- [Request for a Period of Noncompliance](#) [PDF; new policy March 2022]
- [Seeking Accreditation at a Higher or Lower Degree Level](#) (Revised June 2021) [PDF]

## Documentation

- [Substantive Change Cover Sheet](#) [PDF] (Revised 04/07/2023)
- [Developing Policy and Procedure Documents](#) [PDF]
- [Documentation Templates in Preparation for a Substantive Change Committee Visit to an Institution](#)
- [Faculty Roster Form](#) [DOC] and [Instruction](#) [PDF]
- [Seeking Accreditation at a Higher or Lower Degree Level](#) [PDF]
- [The Accreditation Liaison](#) [PDF]
- [Institutional Contingency Teach-out Plan Data Templates](#) [Excel; last updated 12/01/2020]
- [Request for a Period of Noncompliance](#) (6/15/2022)[PDF]
- [Request to Rescind a Previously Approved Board Action](#) (6/15/2022)[PDF]