

Document XLI
SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE POLICY

Some new programs are considered by SACSCOC to be substantive changes to the University, while others are not, depending on the program's relation to existing programs at the University. Among the substantive changes, some are minor and require only SACSCOC notification, while others are considered a "significant departure," and require a full proposal to be approved by SACSCOC before starting the program. A significant departure in the program is one in which the proposed new program has no closely-related counterpart among the previously approved programs in the curriculum. A substantive change proposal must be filed, for example, if the new program will be at a new level in the discipline (e.g., a doctoral degree in an area that has heretofore offered programs at the bachelor's and master's levels). Additionally, to determine if a new program is a "significant departure," it is helpful to ask if the new program requires

- Numbers of new faculty?
- Many new courses?
- New library or other learning resources?
- New equipment or facilities?
- A new resource base?

Those programs that do represent a "significant departure" result in a "substantive change" to the institution. In such cases, a notification letter must be sent to SACSCOC by the University's SACSCOC liaison at least six months before program implementation. A Substantive Change Prospectus must be developed by those initiating the program in consultation with their Dean and the University's SACSCOC liaison (contact the Provost's office for information) and submitted to SACSCOC at least three months before program implementation.

Any cooperative or consortial agreement to share instruction or serve students at another institution must be approved through the Chain of Authority and signed by the Chief Academic Officer of each institution before implementation. Such agreements must also be submitted to SACSCOC with a letter of notification by the University's SACS liaison before implementation.

The Assistant Vice President for Academic Affairs will assist in determining if a new program is a significant departure. Those proposing new programs must notify the Assistant Vice President for Academic Affairs at least one year in advance of the proposed start date to begin the process of SACSCOC approval.