

HAMPTON UNIVERSITY

Policy on Substantive Change and Curriculum Revision

I. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that Hampton University maintains compliance with the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) Substantive Change Policy and Procedures. Substantive change includes any significant modification or expansion of the nature and scope of the University, such as the initiation of new academic programs, method or location of instruction, or degree level.

This policy provides a framework for identifying, approving, and reporting substantive changes to SACSCOC in accordance with federal regulations and Commission expectations.

II. Scope

This policy applies to all academic programs, schools, and administrative units at Hampton University that initiate, modify, or discontinue academic programs or instructional delivery methods. It covers:

- Creation of new degree or certificate programs
- Major program revisions or delivery changes (e.g., from in-person to online)
- Off-campus instructional site development or closure
- Changes in credit hours, program length, or degree level
- Contractual or consortial arrangements affecting instruction
- Teach-out plans and agreements

III. Definition of Substantive Change

According to the *SACSCOC Substantive Change Policy and Procedures Manual*, 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.

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 (i.e., credentials) 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 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 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.

All proposed changes must be reviewed by the University's SACSCOC Institutional Liaison to determine if the change requires approval prior to implementation.

IV. Definition of a Curriculum Revision

A curriculum revision is a formal, institutionally approved process for creating a new educational program, closing a program, or modifying an existing educational program's structure, content, or requirements to ensure alignment with disciplinary standards, institutional goals, accreditation expectations, and student learning outcomes. Curriculum revisions may include changes to course titles, descriptions, credit hours, prerequisites, sequencing, or program requirements. All revisions must follow the University's established review and approval process and, when applicable, require review for substantive change under SACSCOC policy.

V. Process for Curriculum Revision and Substantive Change Review

A. Curriculum Revision Process

All new or revised programs must follow the Curricular Revision Transmittal Process, as outlined below, and be documented using the Curricular Revision Transmittal Form. The approval process for proposed curricular revisions begins with faculty approval at the departmental level during a department meeting. The department chair then presents the approved curricular revision proposal to the school dean for transmittal to the school's Program Planning Council/Curriculum Committee for review and approval. The Program Planning Council/Curriculum Committee for each school is composed of representatives from each department housed within the school.

Once approval is received from the Program Planning Council/Curriculum Committee, the proposal is forwarded to the school faculty for consideration at a school-wide faculty meeting. If approved by the school faculty, the school dean reviews the proposed curricular revision and forwards the proposal to the Chief Financial Officer (CFO). The CFO reviews the proposed curricular revisions to assess financial feasibility and resource implications, ensuring that all new or revised academic programs align with the University's budgetary and operational capacities.

If approved by the CFO, the proposal is returned to the dean, who then forwards it to the Registrar to assign course numbers and ensure that the revision complies with the University's credit hour policy. The Registrar will then return the proposal to the dean.

Next, the dean will forward the proposal to the Dean of the Graduate College for approval by the Graduate Council (if the proposal pertains to a graduate program), or directly to the Long Range Planning Council, chaired by the Executive Vice President and Provost, for review and approval. Following this review, the proposal is returned to the dean, who will ensure that the department makes any recommended changes. The dean will then transmit it to the Committee on the Instructional Program. If approved by the Committee on the Instructional Program, the proposal is forwarded to the Hampton University faculty for approval at the next University-wide faculty meeting.

The SACSCOC Liaison will evaluate each revision to determine whether it can be implemented immediately or if a letter of notification or a prospectus is required for approval. The department that submitted the proposal will work with the SACSCOC Liaison to prepare the prospectus.

Curricular Revision Transmittal Process

Step 1. Approval by Department Faculty

Step 2. Approval by the Program Planning Council/Curriculum Committee

Step 3. School faculty

Step 4. School Dean Review

Step 5. Chief Financial Officer Approval – The CFO reviews the proposal for the financial implications.

Step 6. Registrar review for course number assignment and credit hour evaluation

Step 7. Approval by the Graduate Council (if applicable)

Step 8. Approval by the Long Range Planning Council

Step 9. Approval by the Committee on the Instructional Program

Step 10. Approval by the Hampton University Faculty

Step 11. Letter from the SACSCOC Liaison with your implementation next steps – no approval needed, letter of notification/teach-out plan, or approval (prospectus) needed

Step 12. Submission to SACSCOC – If approval is required, a Prospectus or Notification Letter is submitted by the Liaison through the Office of the Provost.

B. Substantive Change Review

Once the internal curricular revision approval process has been completed, the Accreditation Liaison reviews the proposal and SACSCOC guidelines to determine if a substantive change notification is warranted and the type of notification required. If a prospectus is required, the Accreditation Liaison meets with the department chair and/or the faculty member who prepared the proposal for curricular revision to inform them of the requirements for the prospectus and the date by which the prospectus must be submitted for compliance with the SACSCOC substantive change policy.

VI. Timelines, Deadlines, and What to Submit

SACSCOC requires that substantive change documentation be submitted well in advance of implementation. To determine whether a prospectus is required, Hampton University will use course credit hours to calculate the percentage of new content. For example, if an academic program consists of 120 credit hours and the proposal includes 20 new courses at 3 credit hours each, this results in 60 credit hours of new content ($60 \text{ new credit hours} \div 120 \text{ total program hours} = 0.5 \times 100 = 50\% \text{ new content}$). Because this proposal adds 50% new content, the University must have SACSCOC approval.

A. Requires SACSCOC Approval Prior to Implementation:

A new program with 50-100% new content is a significant departure from the institution's existing programs and requires SACSCOC approval prior to implementation. **The Hampton University threshold for approval is ≥ 60 credit hours of new content in a 120 credit hour program.**

- Content is new if it is not currently offered by the institution at the new program's instructional level (associate, baccalaureate, master's, education specialist, or doctoral).
- A determination of the percentage of new content is made by the institution, not SACSCOC.
- New program approval equally applies to a degree, diploma, certificate, or other for-credit credential.
- If the institution is not currently approved to offer courses or programs at the new program's instructional level, a level change approval is required (e.g., the institution's first courses or programs at the baccalaureate degree level).
- **Increasing the level of a program, i.e., offering a new program in a discipline at a higher instructional level than a currently offered program, is by definition a significant departure.** For example, if an institution offers a baccalaureate degree program in a discipline and begins a new program in the same discipline at the master's degree level, then the new program is a significant departure and requires approval prior to implementation. This applies across all instructional levels.

- A proposed degree program that does not meet the program length requirement of Standard 9.2 of the Principles of Accreditation must be submitted as a New Program – Approval prospectus.

a) *Timeline and Deadlines*

For a substantive change requiring approval by SACSCOC senior staff, the submission deadlines are

- **January 1** for changes to be implemented July 1 through December 31 of the same calendar year, and
- **July 1** for changes to be implemented January 1 through June 30 of the subsequent calendar year.

b) *What to submit*

A prospectus: Submit a substantive change prospectus using the outline provided in SACSCOC Substantive Change Policy and Procedures Appendix A for New Program – Approval

VII. Advertising a Program Under SACSCOC Review

Institutions may not advertise or recruit students for a new academic program requiring SACSCOC approval until official written approval has been received.

- Advertising includes public announcements, website postings, brochures, catalogs, or any communication implying that students can apply, enroll, or graduate from the proposed program.
- The only permissible communication prior to approval is a factual statement indicating that the program is “*pending SACSCOC approval.*”
- Once approval is granted, all marketing and admissions materials must reflect the exact program title, degree level, and delivery format approved by SACSCOC.

VIII. Policy Review and Recordkeeping

This policy will be reviewed annually by the SACSCOC Institutional Liaison and updated to align with current SACSCOC policies. The Office of the Provost maintains official records of all curricular revisions, correspondence, notifications, and approvals.

VII. References

- SACSCOC Substantive Change Policy and Procedures (latest version)
- Hampton University Curricular Revision Transmittal Form
- Hampton University Faculty Handbook

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