



Procedure AA-SC-PR1 Substantive Change Compliance

Dates Effective: March 22nd, 2016

Responsible Officer: Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

Sponsoring Department: Institutional Effectiveness and Reporting
Errors or changes to: Office of Legal Affairs

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Objective

The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) must approve all changes proposed by The University of Texas at Arlington (UTA) considered to be substantive according to its Substantive Change Policy AA-SC-PO1 prior to implementation of changes. This procedure outlines the requirements which UTA must follow to comply with the SACSCOC Substantive Change Policy and U.S. Department of Education regulations (34 CFR 602.22). If implementation of changes is desired as soon as possible, the required actions described can be initiated earlier than the stated deadlines in this policy.

Scope

This procedure applies to all changes at UTA that fall under the scope of UTA's Substantive Change Policy and the SACSCOC Substantive Change Policy.

Responsibilities

Academic Dean



The academic dean must assign an associate dean to monitor substantive change proposals related to academic degree programs, certificates and courses within the college.

Department Chair (or Organizational Equivalent) Coordinating the Substantive Change

The department chair or organizational equivalent must ensure that the appropriate dean is made aware of any proposed changes to a program, certificate, and courses offered for academic credit that may be considered to be substantive and notify the designated appropriate dean of each proposed new program or program.

Dean

The dean must monitor potential substantive changes in the college/school and:

- Be familiar with all applicable Texas Higher Education Board (THECB), SACSCOC, UT System and UT Arlington policies;
- Serve as the contact among entities involved with a substantive change as described in this procedure;
- Provide documentation required to facilitate the process as described herein; and
- Verify to the SACSCOC Liaison that no substantive changes have been made prior to receipt of approval from SACSCOC

Associate Vice Provost for Undergraduate Studies or Vice President for Research, or Designee

Responsibilities assigned above to the Dean, and communication of each potential substantive change related to their respective degree programs, certificates and courses to the Undergraduate Assembly (for undergraduate programs), the Graduate Assembly (for graduate programs) and the Accreditation SACSCOC Liaison, as soon as notified by the associate dean.

SACSCOC Liaison

For university level substantive changes, the liaison obtains and provides to the SACSCOC a letter of notification from the President at least six (6) months prior to the planned change. For College/Department/Program level substantive changes, the liaison receives information regarding potential substantive changes from the Associate Vice Provost for Undergraduate Studies or Vice President for Research or designee and coordinates all submissions of substantive changes to the SACSCOC.



Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

The Provost receives recommendations regarding undergraduate programs and ensures that all documentation notifications and approvals arising from all proposed substantive changes are completed prior to implementation.

President or his/her Designated Representative

The President or his/her designated representative informs the SACSCOC Liaison of the proposed change at least nine (9) months in advance of the proposed implementation date or sooner, as required; provides the SACSCOC Liaison all information/documentation required by the SACSCOC Substantive Change Policy; and may implement the change once informed of SACSCOC approval

Procedures

University Level (Non-Academic or Administrative-Related) Substantive Changes

University level substantive change, either non-academic or administrative -related, can only be initiated with prior notice to UT System and the THECB before submission for approval or providing notice to the SACSCOC.

The following changes are considered by UTA to be non-academic or administrative-related university level changes that require the approval of the SACSCOC prior to implementation:

- Any change in UTA's established mission or objectives;
- Any change of UTA's legal status, governance, form of control, or ownership
- Establishment of a branch campus;
- Closing a branch campus or institution (and initiating related teach-out agreements);
- Acquiring another institution;
- Acquiring a program or location from another institution;
- Changing from clock hours to credit hours;
- Adding a permanent location at a site where UTA is conducting a teach-out program for a closed institution;



- Initiating a merger/consolidation
- Relocating a main campus; or
- Entering into a contract by which an entity not eligible for Title IV. funding offers 25% or more of the accredited institution's programs.

The necessary steps for ensuring compliance for university changes are grouped by role below. If the change is not initiated by the UT System, the President or designee must obtain the approval of the proposed change from the UT system before pursuing the steps in ii and iv below.

- The President (or his/her designated representative) must inform the SACSCOC Liaison of the proposed change in the form of a draft notification letter at least nine (9) months in advance of the proposed implementation date or as soon as possible if less time is available.
- The SACSCOC liaison, upon learning of the impending proposed change, must obtain and provide to the SACSCOC a letter of notification from the President at least six (6) months prior to the planned change.
- Upon receipt of required approvals from UTA, UT System and State levels, the President (or his/her designated representative) will provide the SACSCOC Liaison all information/documentation required by the SACSCOC Substantive Change Policy.
- The SACSCOC Liaison will:
 - Provide the package of substantive change materials to the SACSCOC, and
 - Inform the President when SACSCOC approval is obtained.
 - The President may implement the change once informed of the SACSCOC approval.

College/Department/Program Level (Academic-Related) Substantive Changes

College/Department/Program Level Changes require the prior approvals within the institution and from the UT System and the THECB before submission for approval to the SACSCOC (see related HOP Policy AA-PRS-PO2 Policy Statement Regarding Program Abandonment and university policies pertaining to proposal review by the Undergraduate or Graduate Assembly).

The following changes are considered by UTA to be academic- related College/Department/Program level changes that may require the approval of the SACSCOC prior to implementation.

- Adding courses or programs that would represent a significant departure in content from those offered currently;
- Adding courses or programs of study at a degree or credential level different from that which is included in UTA's current accreditation or reaffirmation;
- Initiating a degree completion program;
- Initiating certification programs;
- Substantially increasing the number of credit hours awarded for successful completion of a program;
- Initiating a collaborative academic arrangement (dual or joint educational program);
- Changing from clock hours to credit hours (UTA currently only awards credit hours.);
- Initiating an off-campus site for program offerings, including Early College High School programs offered at a high school;
- Adding new program offerings at a previously-approved off-campus site;
- Moving an off-campus instructional site (serving the same geographic area);
- Initiating the first program via distance learning;
- Initiating programs or courses offered through a contractual agreement or consortium; and
- Closing a program or eliminating an office-campus site for a program and initiating any related teach-out agreements.

Determining if Change Requires UTA, UT System and THECB Approval

To comply with UTA's Substantive Change Policy, each college or other administrative unit involved in proposing a change must work with the offices designated below to determine whether the change must receive UTA, UT System and THECB approval and is considered to be a substantive change according to the definition above, so that SACSCOC can be notified and/or approval to implementation. The necessary steps are grouped by role below:

- The academic dean may assign an assistant dean to monitor substantive change proposals related to academic degree programs, certificates and courses within the college.

- The department chair or organizational equivalent must ensure that the appropriate dean/assistant dean is made aware of any proposed changes to a program, certificate, and courses offered for academic credit that may be considered to be substantive and:
 - Notify the designated appropriate dean/assistant dean of each proposed new program or program.
 - No program or courses requiring approval by the SACSCOC may be implemented until the department chair or equivalent receives notification of SACSCOC approval from the associate dean. Because UTA must receive formal notice of approval for many types of substantive changes from the Undergraduate or Graduate Assembly, UT System and/or before submitting the substantive change material to the SACSCOC for approval, it may not be possible to receive approval by the preferred implementation date.
 - Proposals for new degree programs must be reviewed and approved by the Undergraduate or Graduate Assembly, UT System Board of Regents and THECB before notifying SACSCOC. As these approvals can take up to a year to obtain, these proposals must be submitted to the appropriate associate dean at least 12 months prior to SACSCOC notification.
 - Proposals for new certificate programs must be reviewed and approved by the Undergraduate and Graduate Assembly before notifying SACSCOC. Proposals should be submitted to either Assembly at least 3 months prior to SACSCOC notification.
 - Other proposals for changes that SACSCOC considers substantive which do not require review or approval by the Undergraduate Assembly, Graduate Assembly, UT System or THECB must be submitted to the appropriate associate dean at least 9 months prior to planned implementation.
 - Prepare required substantive change materials (including the teach-out agreement and teach-out plan for an eliminated program or off-campus site) and submit to the associate dean. (Depending on the complexity of the change, approval once SACSCOC receives the substantive change material can take up to eight months.)
 - Comply with all aspects of this policy and HOP 6-1300: Policy Statement Regarding Program Abandonment.
- The dean or designated assistant dean must monitor potential substantive changes in the college and:

- Be familiar with the HOP policies related to programs, certificates, and courses, the responsibilities of the department chair, and all substantive change issues identified by the SACSCOC Substantive Change Policy;
 - Be familiar with UT System and THECB policies on substantive change proposals;
 - Serve as the contact between the department chair, the Dean, the Provost, the Associate Vice Provost for Undergraduate Studies, and the Vice President for Research (or designee) depending on the level of the proposed change, and the SACSCOC Liaison regarding all substantive change issues;
 - Communicate the plan for each change in degree or certificate program or courses to the SACSCOC Liaison and either the Associate Vice Provost for Undergraduate Studies or Vice President for Research will determine if the change is substantive
 - Provide a draft letter describing the substantive change to the SACSCOC Liaison at least seven months prior to the planned implementation (or as soon as possible if given less notice.);
 - Submit departmental substantive change materials (including the teach-out plan for an eliminated program or off-campus site) to the SACSCOC Liaison at least six months prior to planned implementation (or as soon as possible if given less notice);
 - Notify the department chair or equivalent that SACSCOC approval has been obtained when informed by the SACSCOC Liaison; and
 - Verify to the SACSCOC Liaison that no substantive change has been implemented before SACSCOC approval has been obtained from the SACSCOC Liaison.
- Associate Vice Provost for Undergraduate Studies or Vice President for Research or designee must communicate each potential substantive change related to their respective degree programs, certificates and courses to the Undergraduate Assembly (for undergraduate programs), the Graduate Assembly (for graduate programs) and the Accreditation SACSCOC Liaison, as soon as notified by the associate dean.
 - The Graduate Assembly will convey a recommendation to approve or deny changes to graduate programs to the Vice President for Research. The Vice President for Research, with input from the Graduate Office, will convey to the Provost a recommendation to approve or deny changes to graduate programs.

- The Undergraduate Assembly will convey recommendations regarding undergraduate programs directly to the Provost.
- No program or courses requiring approval by the SACSCOC may be implemented until the department chair or equivalent receives notification of SACSCOC approval from the associate dean. Because UTA must receive formal notice of approval from the THECB for changes it considers substantive before submitting the substantive change material to the SACSCOC for approval, it may not be possible to receive approval by the preferred implementation date.
- Delays in notification to the associate dean and/or submission of appropriate materials to the Undergraduate or Graduate Assembly, UT System, THECB, or the SACSCOC Liaison may result in delays in approval by the SACSCOC. In addition delays in notification to the SACSCOC may, depending upon the nature of the substantive change, result in:
 - Delays in implementation of the program or courses, or
 - Suspension of the program or courses until approval is obtained.
- See the SACSCOC Substantive Change Policy for requirements details. <http://www.sacscoc.org/SubstantiveChange.asp>. Changes considered "substantive" and the SACSCOC policy regarding each are identified in the SACSCOC Substantive Changes for Accredited Institutions of the Commission on Colleges Policy Statement found on the SACSCOC website. This document provides useful guidance, and also links to other policies that apply under certain circumstances.

Expedited Implementation

If implementation of changes is desired as soon as possible, the required actions described can be initiated earlier than the stated deadlines in this policy.

Penalty for Noncompliance

Failure to receive approval of changes considered substantive according to SACSCOC prior to implementation can result in sanctions to UTA.

Definitions

Note: Other than "Academic Dean", the following definitions are included in the SACSCOC Substantive Change Policy, the Mergers and Consolidations Policy,



Collaborative Academic Arrangements Policy, or the substantive change definition used by SACSCOC (quoted below).

Vice President for Research: The Vice President for Research is responsible for graduate programs at UTA. He or she draws on the Office of Graduate Studies which is administratively housed in his unit for support. He or she may designate an appropriate member of the Office of Graduate Studies to oversee and make recommendations concerning graduate program changes.

Branch Campus: A location of an institution that is geographically apart and independent of the main campus of the institution. A location is independent of the main campus if the location is permanent in nature; offers courses in educational programs leading to a degree, certificate, or other recognized educational credential; has its own faculty and administrative or supervisory organization; and has its own budgetary and hiring authority. (UTA currently does not operate a branch campus.)

Certificate Program: For purposes of this policy, a certificate program is an organized set of courses to be offered for academic credit which (1) has been previously approved by SACSCOC but will be offered at a new off-campus site, or (2) is a significant departure from a previously approved program.

Change of Ownership: The sale or transfer to, or acquisition by, a new owner of all, or a substantial portion, of the institution's assets, or the assets of a branch campus or site.

Collaborative Academic Arrangements: Defined by the SACSCOC as agreements between institutions accredited by the SACSCOC and accredited or non-accredited degree-granting institutions of higher education throughout the world for purposes of awarding academic credits and/or educational program completion credentials (e.g. certificates, diplomas, degrees or transcripts). Collaborative academic arrangements are most commonly identified as dual or joint educational programs, affiliations, partnerships, consortia agreements, and other similar terms. The most common forms of collaborative academic arrangements are dual educational programs and joint educational programs.

- A dual educational program is one whereby students study at two or more institutions, and each institution awards a separate program completion credential bearing only its own name, seal and signature.
- A joint educational program is one whereby students study at two or more institutions and are awarded a single program completion credential bearing the names, seals, and signatures of each of the participating institutions.



College/Department/Program Level Change: An academic-related change that requires prior approvals within the institution and from the UT System and the THECB before submission for approval to SACSCOC.

Consolidation: The combination or transfer of the assets of at least two distinct institutions to that of a newly-formed institution. An example includes two colleges consolidating to form a new institution. (See also Change of Ownership and Merger.)

Correspondence Education: A formal educational process under which the institution provides instructional materials, by mail or electronic transmission, including examinations on the materials, to students who are separated from the instructor. Interaction between the instructor and the student is limited, is not regular and substantive, and is primarily initiated by the student; courses are typically self-paced. (UTA currently does not offer correspondence education.)

Degree Completion Program: A program typically designed for a non-traditional undergraduate population such as working adults who have completed some college-level course work but have not achieved a baccalaureate degree. Students in such programs may transfer in credit from courses taken previously. Courses in degree completion programs are often offered in an accelerated format or meet during evening and weekend hours, or may be offered via distance learning technologies. (UTA currently does not offer degree completion programs.)

Distance Education: A formal educational process in which the majority of the instruction (interaction between students and instructors and among students) in a course occurs when students and instructors are not in the same place. Instruction may be synchronous or asynchronous. A distance education course may use the internet; one-way and two-way transmissions through open broadcast, closed circuit, cable, microwave, broadband lines, fiber optics, satellite, or wireless communications devices; audio conferencing; or video cassettes, DVD's, and CD-ROMs if used as part of the distance learning course or program.

Educational Program: A coherent course of study leading to the awarding of a credential (i.e. a degree, diploma or certificate).

University Level Change: A non-academic or administrative-related change.

Merger: The acquisition by one institution of another institution's assets. An example includes an institution accredited by SACSCOC acquiring the assets of a non-accredited institution. (See also change of ownership and consolidation).

Modified Prospectus: A prospectus submitted in lieu of a full prospectus for certain designated substantive changes. When a modified prospectus is acceptable, the SACSCOC specifies requested information from the institution.



Notification: A letter from an institution's chief executive officer or his/her designated representative, to the SACSCOC President summarizing a proposed change, providing the intended implementation date, and listing the complete physical address, if the change involves the initiation of an off-campus site or branch campus. The policy and procedures for reporting and review of university substantive change are outlined in the document "Substantive Change for Accredited Institutions of the Commission on Colleges."

Off-campus Sites: Any facilities located geographically physically separate from the main campuses of UTA.

SACSCOC Accreditation (SACSCOC Liaison): The Individual at UTA charged with ensuring UTA's compliance with accreditation requirements. For a full description of duties and activities this position entails, see the SACSCOC "The Accreditation SACSCOC Liaison" in Sec. V.M., page 1-2, "Responsibilities of the Accreditation SACSCOC Liaison".

Significant Departure: A program that is not closely related to previously approved programs at the institution or site or for the mode of delivery in question. See SACSCOC Substantive Change Policy for indications a departure may be considered significant.

Substantive Change: Defined by the SACSCOC as a significant modification or expansion of the nature and scope of an accredited institution. These changes include: any change in the established mission or objectives of the institution; any change in legal status, form of control, or ownership of the institution; 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 institution 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 institution's current accreditation or reaffirmation; a substantial change in the number of credit hours awarded for successful completion of a program; the establishment of an additional location geographically apart from the main campus at which the institution 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 such as 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 institution is conducting a teach-out program for a closed institution; or entering into a contract by which an entity not eligible for Title IV funding offers 25% or more of the accredited institution's programs.

Teach-out Agreement: A written agreement between institutions that provides for the equitable treatment of students and a reasonable opportunity for students to



complete their program of study if an institution or an university location that provides fifty percent or more of at least one program offered ceases to operate before all enrolled students have completed their program of study. Such a teach-out agreement requires SACSCOC approval in advance of implementation.

Teach-out Plan: A written plan developed by an institution that provides for the equitable treatment of students if an institution, or an university location that provides fifty percent or more of at least one program, ceases to operate before all students have completed their program of study, and may include, if required by the institution's accrediting agency, a teach-out agreement between institutions. Teach-out plans must be approved by SACSCOC in advance of implementation.

Relevant Federal and State Statutes and Accreditation Standards

U.S. Department of Education regulations (34 CFR 602.22)

SACSCOC Substantive Change Policy

Substantive Change for Accredited Institutions of the Commission on Colleges

Relevant UT System and UTA Policies, Procedures, and Forms

Substantive Change Policy AA-SC-PO1

Contact Information

All questions regarding this procedure should be forwarded to the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Reporting