



Substantive Change Procedure

Procedure Number: 219

Responsible Office: Academic Affairs

Forms: N/A

Effective Date: 8/22/24

Date Last Reviewed: 8/22/24

1. Purpose

The Substantive Change procedure, required by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC), ensures that all substantive changes are reported in accordance with federal policy.

SACSCOC Principles of Accreditation requires that NOVA has a policy that covers the full range of possible substantive changes.

2. Definitions

Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC): The recognized regional accrediting body in the 11 U.S. southern states and in Latin America for those institutions of higher education that award associate, baccalaureate, master's or doctoral degrees.

Substantive Change: a significant modification or expansion of the nature and scope of an accredited institution, including:

- a. Any change in the established mission or objectives of the institution.
- b. Any change in legal status, form of control or ownership of the institution.
- c. 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.
- d. 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.
- e. A change from clock hour to credit hour.
- f. A substantial increase in the number of clock or credit hours awarded for successful completion of a program.
- g. The establishment of an additional location geographically apart from the main campus at which the institution offers at least 25 percent of an educational program.



- h. The establishment of a branch campus.
- i. Closing a program, off-campus site, branch campus or institution.
- j. Entering a collaborative academic arrangement such as a dual or joint academic program with another institution.
- k. Acquiring another institution or a program or location of another institution.
- l. Adding a permanent location at a site where the institution is conducting a teach-out program for a closed institution.
- m. Entering into a contract by which an entity not eligible for Title IV funding offers 25% or more of one or more of the accredited institution's program.

SACSCOC reporting requirements are more specific than this list. Additionally, this list may change as federal regulations change.

Prospectus: A formal request for a substantive change requiring specific documentation. Substantive changes requiring SACSCOC Board of Trustees approval must include a complete prospectus submitted by March 15 for the June meeting or September 1 for the December meeting. Substantive changes requiring SACSCOC Executive Council of the Board of Trustees approval, must include a prospectus submitted by January 1 for implementation between July 1 to December 31 or July 1 for implementation between January 1 to June 30 the following year.

Notification: A letter to SACSCOC indicating a substantive change will occur. Notifications must be submitted prior to implementation of the change.

3. Procedure

Reporting of any Substantive Change to SACSCOC is the responsibility of NOVA's SACSCOC Liaison, who is appointed by the NOVA's president and assisted by the Coordinator of Curriculum Initiatives.

Individual procedures listed below are based on SACSCOC [Substantive Change Policy and Procedures](#).

Institutional Changes

- a. Acquisitions; Governance Change; Institution Closure; Institution Relocation; Institutional Contingency Teach-out Plan; Merger/Consolidation; Ownership, Means of Control, or Legal Status Change

Responsibility: President

Substantive Change Identified: Requires approval of the College Board, VCCS Chancellor, the State Board for Community Colleges, and/or State Council of Higher Education of Virginia.

Procedure: Upon approvals of required entities, College President directs the Accreditation Liaison to submit a prospectus within the appropriate time frame.



b. Change in Measure of Student Progress to Completion, Level Change, Mission Change

Responsibility: Chief Academic Officer

Substantive Change Identified: Requires approval of the College Board, VCCS Chancellor, the State Board for Community Colleges, and/or State Council of Higher Education of Virginia.

Procedure: Upon approvals of required entities, College President directs the Accreditation Liaison to submit a prospectus within the appropriate time frame.

c. Prison Education Program—Institutional-level Approval

Responsibility: Chief Academic Officer and Vice President of Finance and Administration

Substantive Change Identified: Requires a signed Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with an oversight entity (generally Department of Corrections, Prison Administration).

Procedure: Upon receipt of a signed MOA, the Chief Academic Officer requests the Accreditation Liaison submit a prospectus within the appropriate time frame.

Program Changes

a. Clock-Credit Hour Conversions, Competency-based Education by Direct Assessment, Correspondence Education, Program Designed for Prior Learning

Responsibility: Chief Academic Officer

Substantive Change Identified: Requires approval of Curriculum Committee and Administrative Council; may require approval of College Board, VCCS and/or SCHEV.

Procedure: Upon approvals of required entities, the Chief Academic Officer directs the Accreditation Liaison to submit a notification or prospectus within the appropriate time frame.

b. Cooperative Academic Arrangements, Dual Academic Award, Joint Academic Award

Responsibility: Chief Academic Officer and Vice President of Finance and Administration

Substantive Change Identified: Requires a signed MOA

Procedure: Upon receipt of the signed MOA, the Chief Academic Officer directs the Accreditation Liaison to submit a notification or prospectus within the appropriate time frame.

c. Method of Delivery

Responsibility: Chief Academic Officer and Pathway Deans

Substantive Change Identified: When a current program is offered in a new delivery method (competency-based, distance--both synchronous and asynchronous, or face-to-face instruction), Pathway Dean must notify Academic Affairs. Pathway Deans are responsible for knowing when a program changes its delivery method by 25% or more.

Procedure: The Pathway Dean will request that the Accreditation Liaison submit a notification or prospectus within the appropriate time frame.

d. New Programs, Program Length Changes, Programs Designed for Prior Learning

Responsibility: Chief Academic Officer

Substantive Change Identified: Requires approval of Curriculum Committee and Administrative Council; may require approval of College Board, VCCS and/or SCHEV.

Procedure: Chief Academic Officer will direct the Accreditation Liaison to submit a notification or prospectus within the appropriate time frame.

e. Program Closures, Program Reopening

Responsibility: Chief Academic Officer

Substantive Change Identified: Requires approval of Curriculum Committee and Administrative Council; may require approval of College Board, VCCS and/or SCHEV.

Procedure: Chief Academic Officer will direct the Accreditation Liaison to submit a notification or prospectus within the appropriate time frame.

Off-Campus Instructional Sites

a. New Off-Campus Instructional Site (OCIS)—Non-Branch Campus, OCIS Site Re-Open

Responsibility: Provosts, Dual Enrollment Associate Director (DE AD)

Substantive Change Identified: When any new course is taught at an off campus location, the Provost of that campus or the Dual Enrollment Associate Director must alert Academic Affairs at least six months prior to the course being offered.

Procedure: Chief Academic Officer will request that the Accreditation Liaison submit a notification or prospectus within the appropriate time frame.

b. New Off-Campus Instructional Site (OCIS)—Branch Campus

Responsibility: President

Substantive Change Identified: Requires approval of the College Board, VCCS Chancellor, the State Board for Community Colleges, and/or State Council of Higher Education of Virginia.

Procedure: President will direct the Accreditation Liaison and to submit a prospectus within the appropriate time frame.

c. OCIS Closure

Responsibility: Provosts, Dual Enrollment Associate Director (DE AD)

Substantive Change Identified: After a full academic year of not administering a course at an OCIS, the Provost of that campus or the Dual Enrollment Associate Director must alert Academic Affairs to determine if the site should be closed.

Procedure: Provost or DE AD will request the Accreditation Liaison and Coordinator of Curriculum Initiatives submit a prospectus within the appropriate timeframe.

d. OCIS Name or Address Change

Responsibility: Provosts, Dual Enrollment Associate Director (DE AD)

Substantive Change Identified: When any OCIS changes either its name or its address, the Provost of that campus or the Dual Enrollment Associate Director must alert Academic Affairs prior to the name or address change.

Procedure: Provost or DE AD will request that the Accreditation Liaison and submit a notification within the appropriate time frame.