

# Augusta University

## Policy Library

### Substantive Change Policy

#### Policy Manager: Institutional Effectiveness

#### POLICY STATEMENT

Augusta University is responsible for compliance with the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) Substantive Change Policy and Procedures as a condition of continued accreditation. Substantive change is defined by the SACSCOC as “a significant modification or expansion of the nature and scope of an accredited institution.”

Per standard 14.2 of the SACSCOC Principles of Accreditation, Augusta University is required to have a "policy and procedure to ensure that all substantive changes are reported in accordance with SACSCOC policy." This policy outlines the types of substantive changes, appropriate actions for applying for the SACSCOC approval of changes, and the roles and responsibilities of the university community in applying this policy.

#### AFFECTED STAKEHOLDERS

*Indicate all entities and persons within the Enterprise that are affected by this policy:*

- Alumni     Faculty     Graduate Students     Health Professional Students  
 Staff     Undergraduate Students     Vendors/Contractors     Visitors  
 Other:

#### DEFINITIONS

These definitions apply to these terms as they are used in this policy:

**Accreditation** – the recognition that an institution maintains standards requisite for its graduates to gain admission to other reputable institutions of higher learning or to achieve credentials for professional practice. The goal of accreditation is to ensure that education provided by institutions of higher education meets acceptable levels of quality.

**Institutional Accreditation Liaison (IAL)** – A senior leader at an accredited institution whose role is to ensure ongoing compliance with accreditation requirements and SACSCOC policies through training and communication with faculty, staff, and students as well as to notify SACSCOC staff of substantive changes and program developments in accordance with SACSCOC policy. At Augusta University, the Vice President for Institutional Effectiveness fulfills this role.

**Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC)** – The body for the accreditation of degree-granting higher education institutions in the Southern states.

**Substantive Change** – A significant modification or expansion of the nature and scope of an accredited institution.

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**Executive Sponsor: VP, Institutional Effectiveness**

**Next Review: 12/2029**

## **PROCESS & PROCEDURES**

If a change is substantive, the SACSCOC must be notified by Augusta University in accordance with the procedure for that substantive change. Upon becoming aware or suspecting that a proposed change may be substantive, the respective senior officer (e.g., dean or vice president) should notify the IAL, who will provide assistance for notifying the SACSCOC of the change.

The SACSCOC's procedures for handling substantive change can be classified at two levels: changes requiring notification only and changes requiring approval. The IAL will consult with the unit requesting the substantive change to develop a plan to ensure proper procedures are completed and documented. Triggers for considering whether a change is substantive include:

- Changes requiring Board of Regents approval or University System of Georgia notification
- Changes that require significant investment of new resources
- Changes that involve instruction at new locations or via new modalities
- Changes that necessitate a contractual agreement or involve other organizations

The full list of substantive change types, the specific procedure to be used for each, their respective approval/notification requirements, and their reporting timelines are listed in the [SACSCOC Substantive Change Policy and Procedures](#).

If it is discovered that a substantive change has been implemented without notification or approval from the SACSCOC, the appropriate officer has the responsibility to notify the IAL immediately. It is then the responsibility of the IAL to notify the SACSCOC as provided in the SACSCOC policy.

An accredited institution's failure to notify the SACSCOC of changes could result in (1) the loss of Title IV funding or reimbursement to the US Department of Education for money received for programs related to the unreported substantive change and (2) the imposition of a sanction or loss of accreditation. To mitigate these consequences, all instances of noncompliance with the university's substantive change policy will be reported to the Augusta University President, Provost, and other pertinent officers for consideration. Failure to report a substantive change could result in the cancellation or delay of the change being proposed and, and in severe or repeated instances, cancellation of the program itself.

## **REFERENCES & SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS**

[SACSCOC Substantive Change Policy and Procedures](#)

## **RELATED POLICIES**

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**APPROVED BY:**

Interim Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost, Augusta University  
Date: 12/12/2024

President, Augusta University      Date: 1/13/20245